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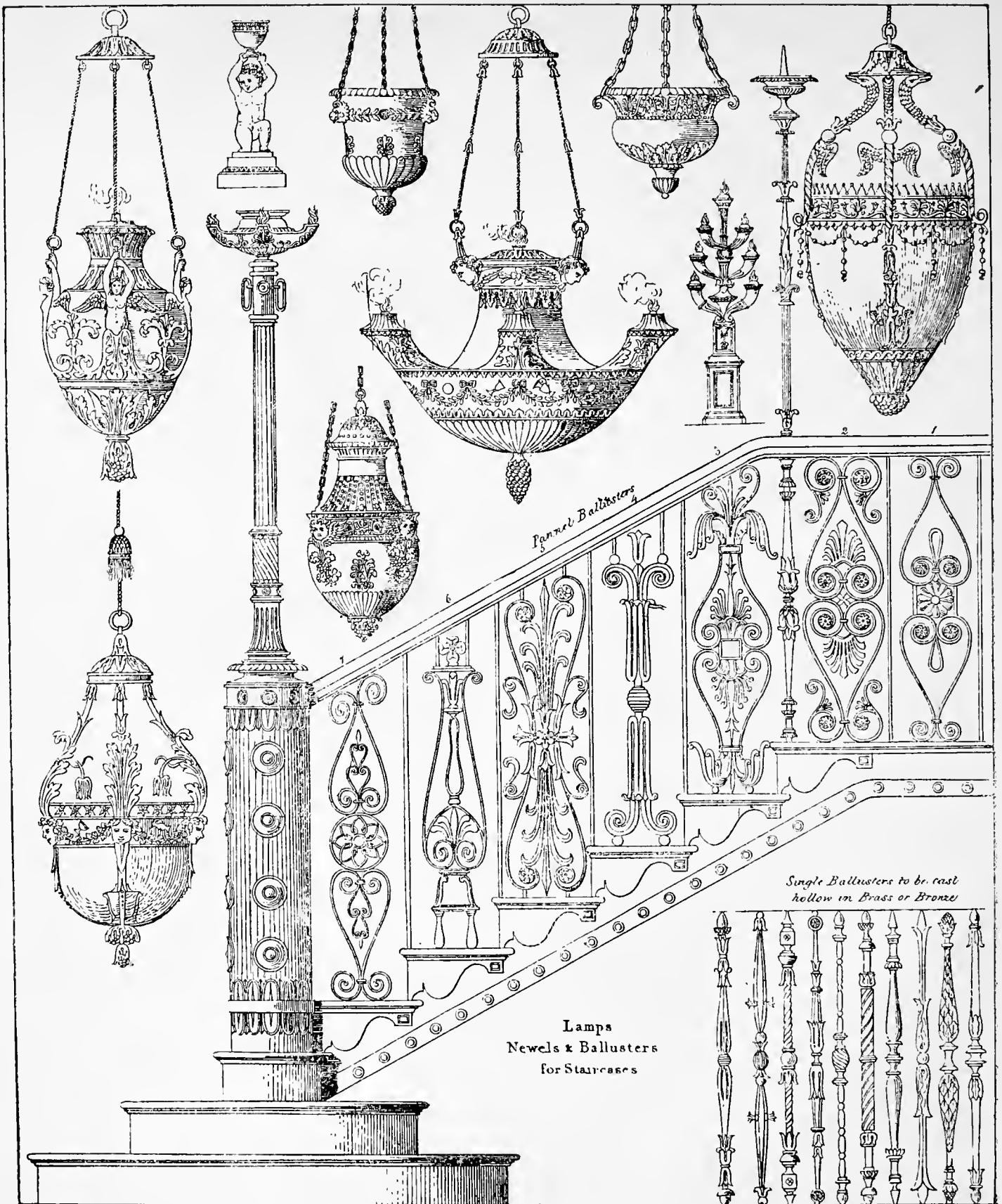
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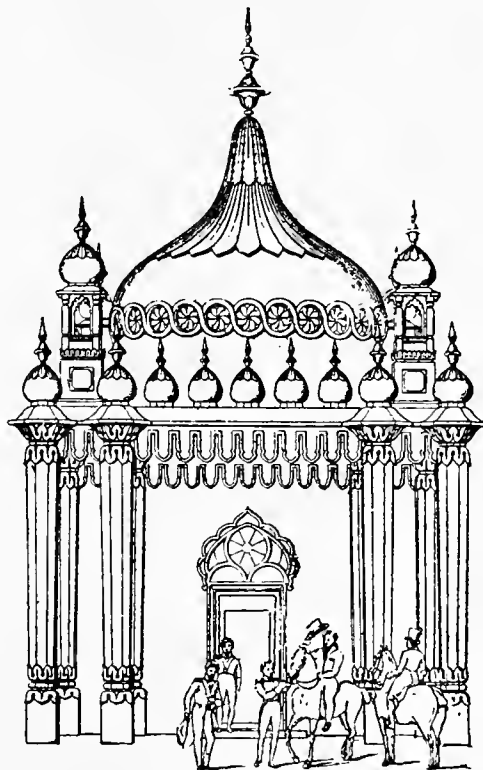


# REGENCY ARCHITECTURE



Designs from THE ORNAMENTAL METAL WORKER'S DIRECTORY by L. N. Cottingham, 1824

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
REGENCY  
ARCHITECTURE



PAUL REILLY

PELLEGRINI & CUDAHY : NEW YORK

GENERAL EDITOR: HUGH CASSON



*Printed in Great Britain by*  
SHENVAL PRESS LTD  
*and published in the U.S.A. by*  
PELLEGRINI & CUDAHY, INC

## PREFACE

THIS SHORT ESSAY does not pretend to be more than an elementary survey of Regency architecture. Its purpose is to draw attention, by way of generalization rather than close examination, to the high lights of a brief but beautiful period of English building. I hope that the lay reader will learn enough from the text and the plates to value this fast-vanishing beauty and to protest energetically when he sees an example of Regency architecture threatened with destruction.

I must, of course, acknowledge my debt to Mr John Summerson for his *Georgian London* (Pleiades Books) and his life of *John Nash, Architect to King George IV* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd), both of which I re-read before starting this present essay.

I should like to thank the Director and the Staff of the National Buildings Record for their courteous help in finding so many of the plates and also the Librarian of the Royal Institute of British Architects for lending for block-making copies of L. N. Cottingham's *Ornamental Metal Worker's Directory*, John Tallis's *London Street Views* and John Nash's *The Royal Pavilion at Brighton*.

Finally, I should like to acknowledge my lasting gratitude to my father, without whose impelling enthusiasms I might never have enjoyed the pleasures of architectural appreciation.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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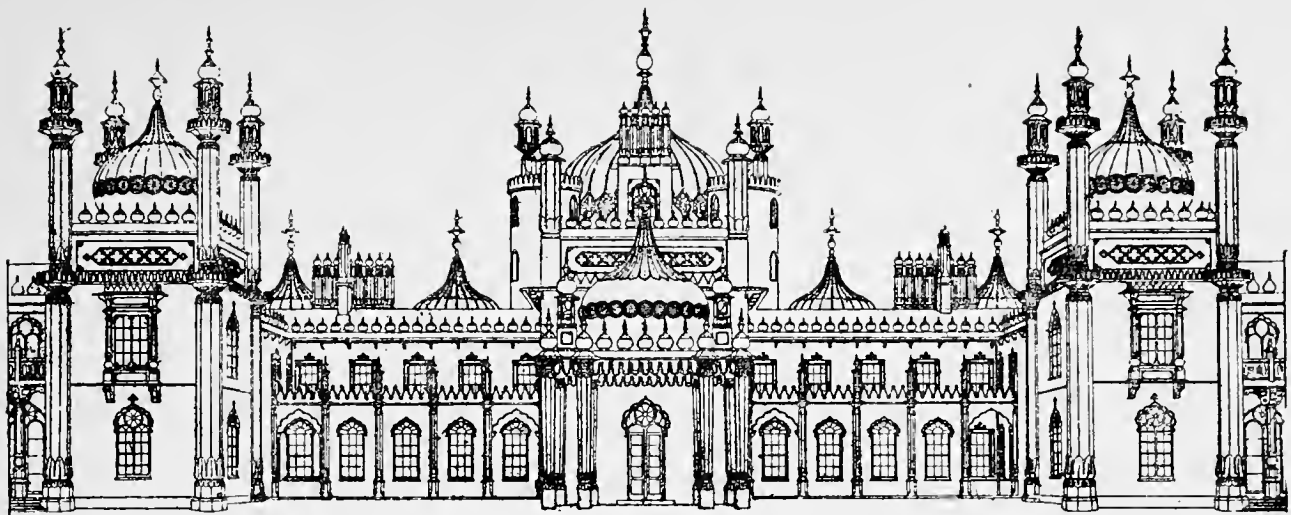
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The Royal Pavilion, Brighton: west front

## REGENCY ARCHITECTURE

IT IS NOT EASY to define Regency architecture. The Regency, as we all know, lasted from 1811–20, but when we talk of Regency architecture we are not thinking of the immediate results of ten years of building. Were we to do so we would be confining ourselves to a relatively barren period, certainly not one that quantitatively could have attracted the attention of posterity. The post-Napoleonic building boom had barely got started by the time that the Regency ended and the extravagant Prince Regent became the even more spendthrift King George IV. A fairer definition would call it the architecture of George IV, whether as Regent or as King. But even that would leave unrecorded many buildings and tendencies, at either end of the period, which should be included in an account of Regency architecture.

Yet having settled on dates we are faced with further complications of style and scale. Our period, for instance, can witness such divergencies in style as shown in St Luke's Church, Chelsea (Gothic), Greek villas in Cheltenham, Roman and Greek terraces in London, Indian domes and Chinese interiors in Brighton, and the altogether individual

designs of Sir John Soane in the Bank of England and at Ealing and Dulwich. And in scale the differences are just as marked. At one end we have the Royal Mile of Regent Street and Buckingham Palace, at the other the modest little façades of side streets in Brighton and the innumerable stucco\* villas throughout the land, which are the more noticeable today for their self-effacing decorum.

For the purpose of our argument we can allow the Regency period to run from the turn of the century down to the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, for early Victorian taste, though unequal, did respect many of the canons of the great period of English building and still carried on classical traditions of proportion and detail.

These traditions of proportion derived from the long, uninterrupted reign of Georgian building. The eighteenth century had brought English domestic architecture to a perfection never attained in any other period. The origins of these proportions were classical, that is to say they owed their existence to the rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman forms at the time of the Italian Renaissance. The fact that Roman forms predominated in England during most of the eighteenth century we owe to a sixteenth-century Italian—Andrea Palladio—who set himself to codify the rules of architecture. But he was doing

\*Although stucco was known to the ancient world—the Roman, Vitruvius, in 46 BC gave instructions on its composition and on how to produce a mirror polish on the surface—the earliest known patent for stucco-type cement dates from 1677. This was taken out by Kendricks Edisbury and was called 'Glassis'. Thomas Leverton, the eighteenth-century London architect, used 'Coade's Patent Stone' in Bedford Square, Bloomsbury, in 1777, and the Adam brothers used Liardet's patent cement stucco in Fitzroy Square and on the Adelphi Buildings. 'Roman' or 'Parker's Cement' was patented in London in 1796 and in 1824 a bricklayer called Joseph Aspdin patented 'Portland Cement'. 'Keen's Cement' was patented in 1838. The kind of stucco generally used on the exterior of buildings is a fine mortar with ordinary carbonate of lime for its base. It sets very slowly, resists weather and is washable (M. B. Adams in the *Journal of the R.I.B.A.*, July 27th, 1912).

no more than had one of his pre-Christian predecessors, the Roman Vitruvius. Whether Vitruvius was a practising architect or not, he left behind him a complete set of instructions on how to build correctly, in true proportions and with the proper use of the classical features which are familiar to us all today—the columns, their capitals and entablatures, in fact ‘the orders’ as they came to be called. Palladio added his own touches to these instructions and reissued them as a guide to the architects of the Italian Renaissance. They were introduced to England in the first half of the seventeenth century by Inigo Jones.

Jones had spent several years in Rome and other Italian cities, had studied at first hand the new architecture and had himself become a master in the Italian style of architectural and decorative draughtsmanship. Though he was better known by his contemporaries as a designer of masques and scenery for court theatricals, by posterity he has been recognized as the father of the Anglo-Italian or Palladian school. But his example was not followed by his successors. Though Wren designed in the classical style, with a fine appreciation of classical proportions, he was never a Palladian in the sense that he abode by the rules of the ‘orders’. The acceptance of these rules had to wait for another generation of travellers in Italy to return to England. And this time the travellers were aristocrats, rich and educated men, who, by their patronage, were able to influence our architecture in a way that no single designer or architect could hope to do.

Most famous of these *grands seigneurs* was the Earl of Burlington, who not only combined great wealth with great energy, but was also an amateur of architecture who had discovered for himself the splendour of Palladian compositions and on his return home began, himself, designing houses in the Palladian style or employed architects

like Colin Campbell, Leoni and William Kent to be his torchbearers.

So successful was this young earl in impressing his taste on his associates and contemporaries that for a long stretch of the eighteenth century no one contemplated a departure from the rules. The result was that all large public buildings and country mansions were executed unquestioningly in this style and it was inevitable that the taste of the aristocrat influenced the professional and artisan classes. So we find throughout the eighteenth century a uniformity of touch in all our buildings, from the mansion to the villa, from the palace to the small town house. In the smaller houses no effort was made to reproduce the façade dressings of columns, pediments and entablatures, but nevertheless the Palladian influence was felt in the smaller details of doorways and chimney pieces and these, too, conformed with the standard rules of orders and composition.

That then was one trend in Georgian architecture, a respect for a standard of proportion and design, derived from foreign journeyings of the select few, who not only studied architecture as an integral part of their education (the Princes of Wales had their own private architectural tutors), but also had on their bookshelves the standard works laying down the rules and forms of good building.

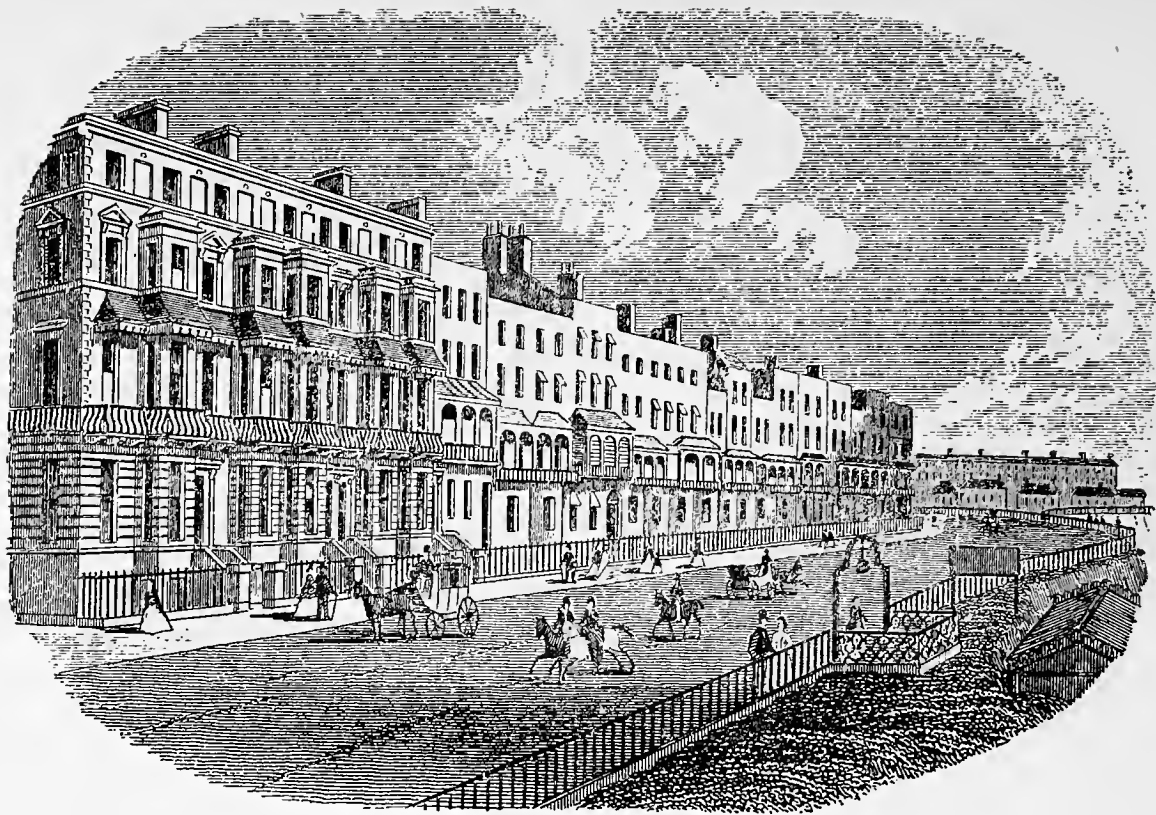
But there were other influences at work which must be included in any assessment of Georgian building. To see Regency architecture in a true perspective we must trace our steps back into the eighteenth century to understand the links which tie the Regency to the Georgian and the departures which distinguish the two periods.

The second feature that marks out Georgian building from previous and subsequent eras is the idea of 'terrace' architecture. Terrace is a word applied to all building which groups in a uniform composition a number of individual living units. The first terrace seen in

England was probably the Inigo Jones Piazza in Covent Garden. He built two sides of a square, uniform in design, each house merging into the one composition and all united by a repeating arcade on the ground level. Not much is now left of these terraces, but they were the forerunners of all the London squares and street architecture. A more obvious pattern was set by John Wood, the elder, of Bath, who in the first quarter of the eighteenth century began building a complete section of a fashionable town in the one style, grouping his houses into single architectural compositions. His son carried on his good work, adding in 1769 his famous Royal Crescent, probably the finest single example of terrace architecture. The word 'terrace', too, may perhaps be traced to Bath, for much of the building of that remarkable city was made possible by the levelling of flat terraces out of the hillsides on which to build those connected series of town houses.

Architecturally the terrace was a marked departure from the individual efforts of the earlier builders. Imagine the old Strand of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a series of Tudor or Jacobean palaces, linked by the broken gables of smaller dwellings, all competing with each other to catch the eye of the passer-by. There is no denying the charm of such a medley in its original state, but it was no attempt at town or street architecture. The Georgian builders remodelled the Strand and through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries achieved a uniformity and dignity which can still be enjoyed in old prints and, from the few existing pieces (like the stucco block with rounded corner features known as West Strand), can still be imagined by the visitor who takes the trouble to search for it among the grotesque rivalries of the commercial era.

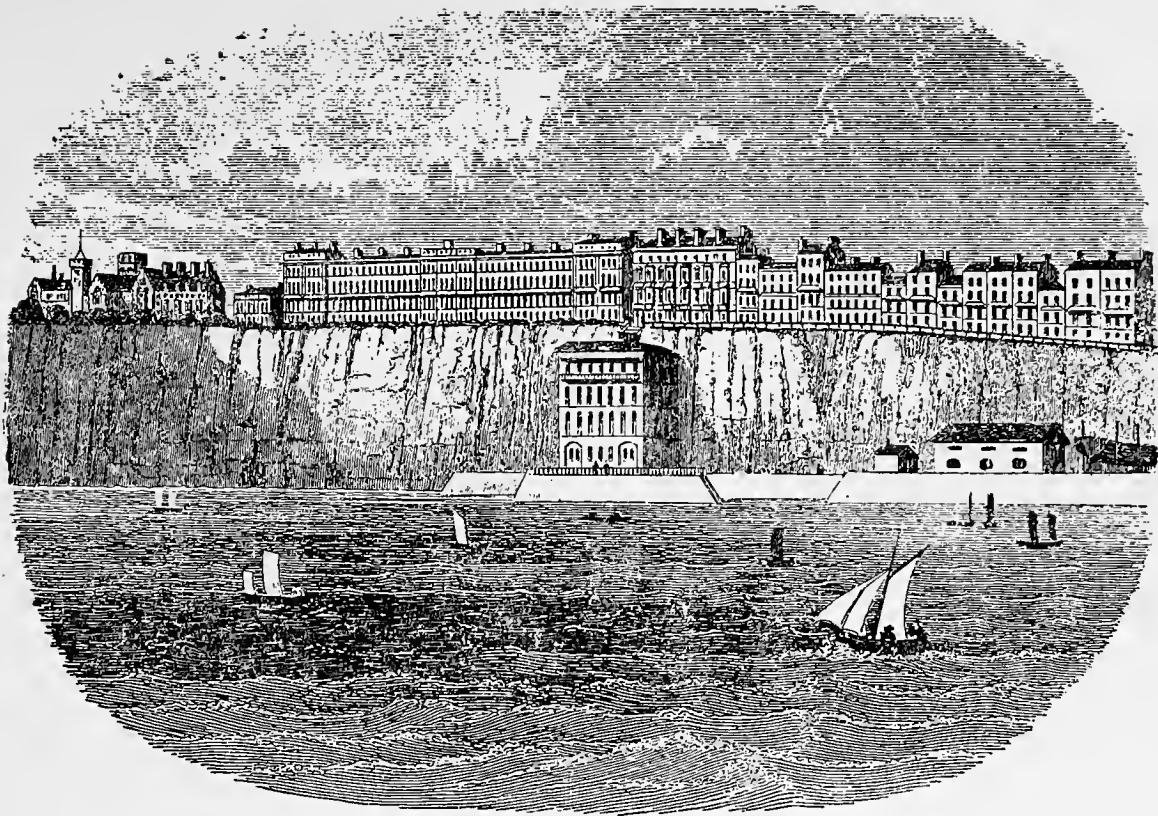
The new terrace architecture was not only an architectural departure. It was a social phenomenon, reflecting a new attitude to life



Examples of speculative building in terrace architecture. The Paragon, Ramsgate. The popularity of Ramsgate and Margate as seaside resorts increased rapidly from 1824 when the General Steam Navigation Company started its paddle-wheel steamer service from London

which has by now imparted to the British town dweller some of his more endearing characteristics. The long innings of Georgian building established a common outlook, a neighbourly consistency of approach to everyday living and, one can almost say, a communal enjoyment of the best things in life. The square garden, shared by all who lived round it, was the meeting place for all the members of the neighbourhood unit. It was for the town dweller what the village green was for the countryman. This communal sharing of the seasons, of the trees and the lawns, this free meeting place for the exchange of daily civilities, led to communal acceptance of certain standards and values and taste. The result of this revolution in social outlook on architecture was to implant through several generations a will to conform with the general tenor of the neighbourhood. How rich was the

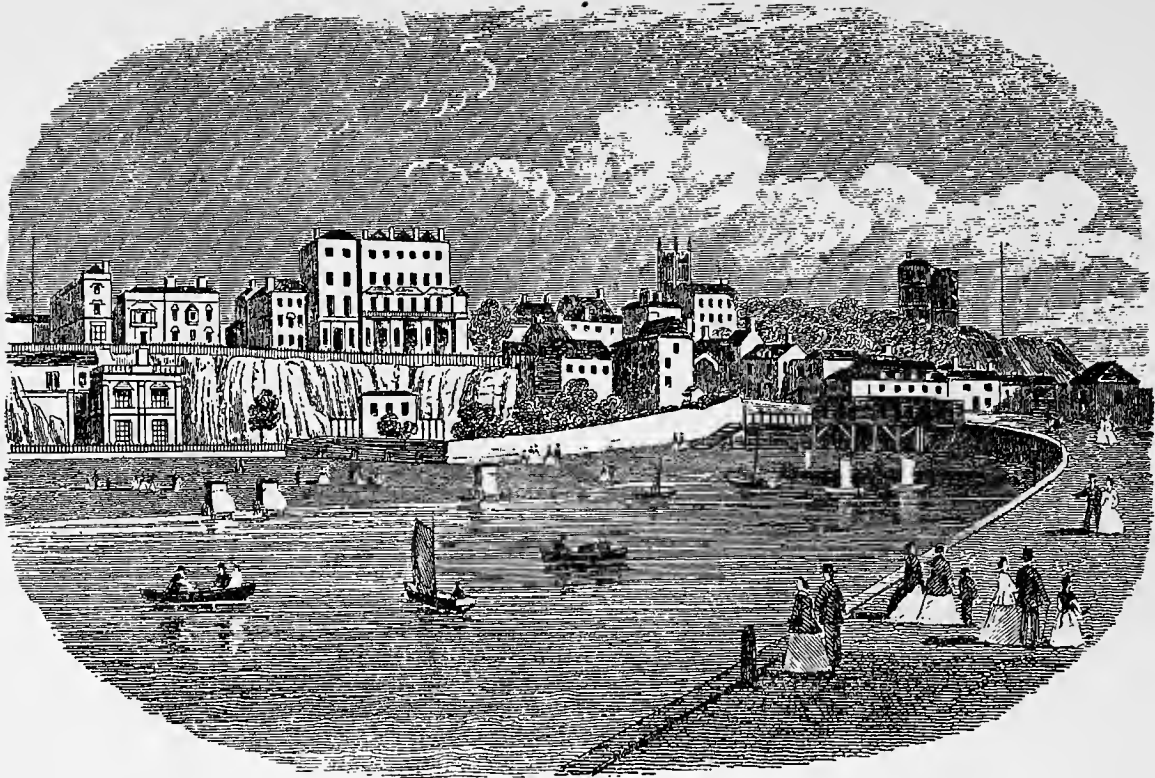




West Cliff, Ramsgate. On the left of this mid-Victorian engraving is the Gothic Church of St Augustine built by Augustus Welby Pugin. The adjacent terrace is in the manner of Regency seaside building

reward of this self-denial we are belatedly beginning to realize. Our distracted and anxious generation can yet enjoy the calm of our Georgian squares and terraces and even in isolated homes up and down the countryside we can recognize the unworried pleasure our ancestors took in knowing that the houses they built would conform with a sure taste and give offence to no one.

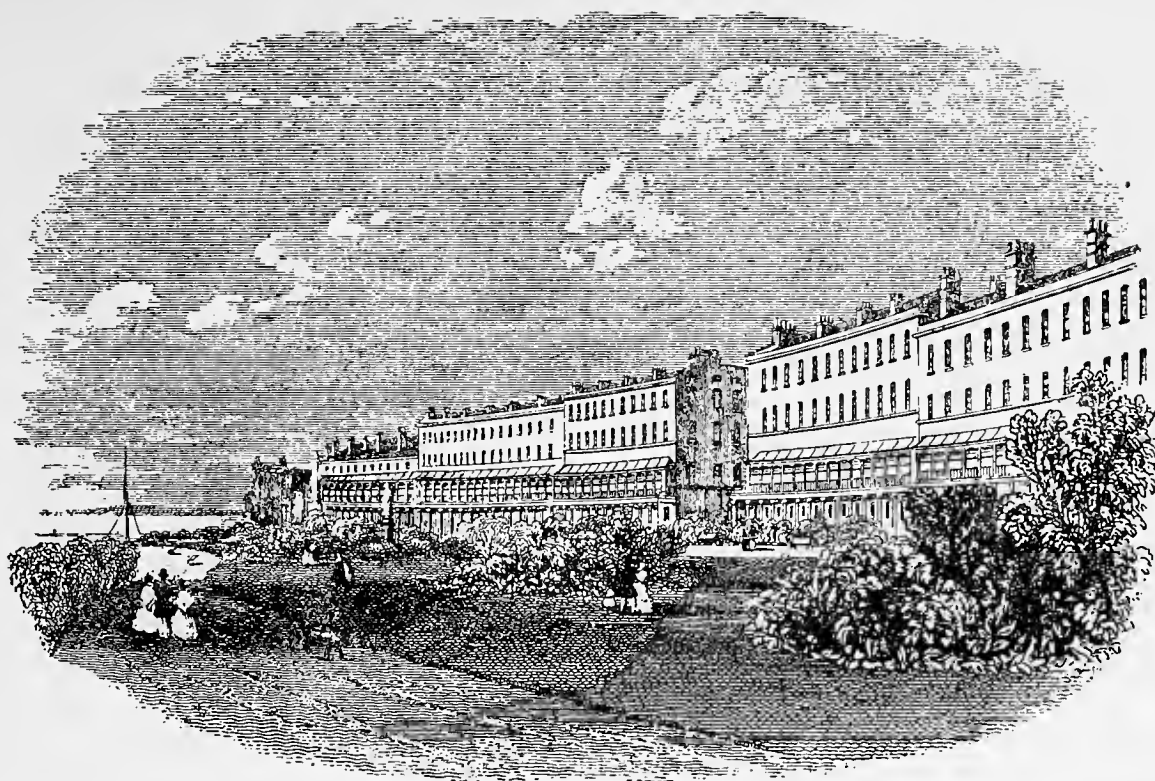
The third characteristic of Georgian building which must be mentioned in a preface to Regency architecture was the speculative basis of the majority of urban developments. In Georgian England speculation had a meaning rather different from our present-day usage. Today the speculator is seldom a great landed proprietor. He buys plots where he can find them and runs up a house or two or an 'estate' (what a use of the word!) and then unloads them on the public. The specula-



Broadstairs from the Pier. This small resort maintained its exclusiveness into the middle years of Victoria's reign

tor today can hardly be called even a builder. He gives little thought to what posterity, five or six generations hence, will find on the site he devastates. But in the eighteenth century speculation in building had not deserved the obloquies that are justly bestowed on our contemporary Philistines. Speculative building was, it is true, the pastime of anyone from a duke to a carpenter, but, and this was the saving grace of their game, the landlord seldom lost sight of his property. Either he himself was the principal speculator, building and letting his houses, or he sold the building rights to a middle-man, a master builder or maybe a member of the professional classes with some money to spend, but he retained the freehold of the land, and in due course the land and the house would revert to his estate. To ensure their reverting in good condition, aesthetically and structurally, he generally employed his own architect or surveyor to pass the plans.





Wellington Crescent, Ramsgate. Long, regular terraces, bound together by hooded balconies, dominate the Harbour, said to have been built by French prisoners captured in the Napoleonic Wars

Now many of us today complain of these iniquitous extortions of the capitalist age and detest the whole paraphernalia of leaseholds (unless indeed like the modern socialists we do not believe in freeholds at all), but we are apt to forget the aesthetic and practical benefits which have accrued to posterity from the system. The shadow of the great landlords, like the Dukes of Bedford or, within the period of our study, the Crown, was a constant source of restraint on the builder and a guarantee that the leaseholder would take on a house built, within reason, to a certain standard of taste and construction. Houses and streets built speculatively a hundred or two hundred years ago still stand four-square to the elements, and still in many cases command the same or greater revenues than when they were built. Will the same be said two hundred years hence of our twentieth-century jerry-buildings?

Proportion, neighbourliness and speculation were then three outstanding characteristics of Georgian building. How were they translated into Regency architecture?

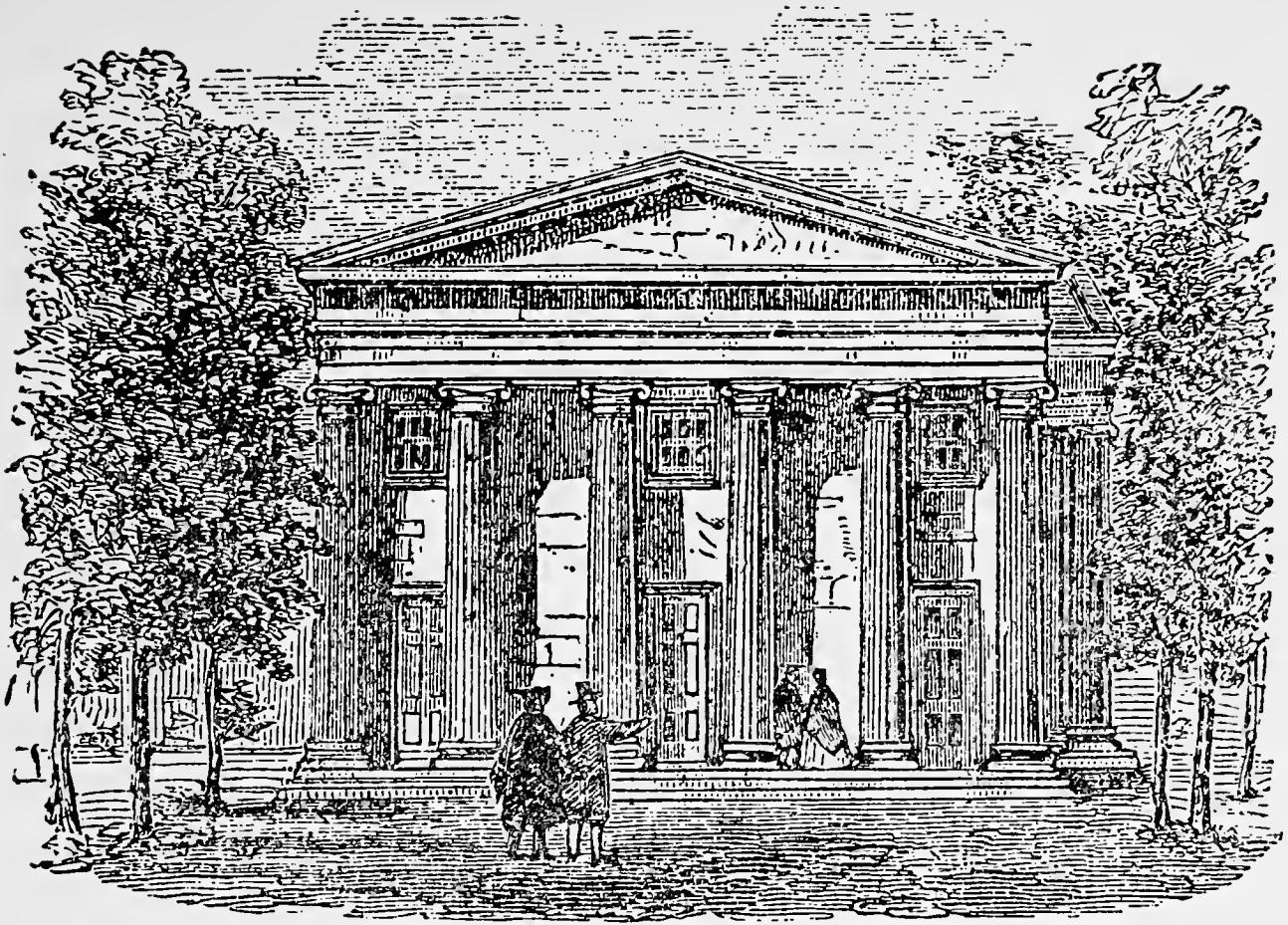
Before answering this question and before leaving the eighteenth century we must stop for a moment to consider Robert Adam. He needs no introduction to most Englishmen and to few Americans. There are in the world today many more Adam fireplaces and doorways and ceilings than he ever built. Plagiarism and falsification have taken their toll of his reputation but they cannot undo the revolution he created in his generation and the loosening of the bonds he effected when he introduced his fanciful details into a world in bondage to rigid rules of columns and bases, rustication and pedimentation and all that respect for Palladio entailed. He was as outspoken in his own praises as he was sensational in his designs. 'We have not trod in the path of others, nor derived aid from their labours . . . The skilful will easily perceive within these few years a remarkable improvement in the form, convenience, arrangement and relieving of apartments; a greater movement and variety in the outside composition, and in the decoration of the inside an almost total change. The massive entablature, the ponderous compartment ceiling, the tabernacle frame, almost the only species of ornament formerly known in this country, are universally exploded, and in their places we have adopted a beautiful variety of light mouldings, gracefully formed, delicately enriched, and arranged with propriety and skill.' He wrote that in 1778 in his preface to *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam, Esquires*, and what architect could say fairer than that about his own work? But in truth it was no exaggeration. Adam's approach to domestic building was indeed explosive. He blew sky-high the prevailing fashion and in its place provided a free and mobile treatment, spatially and in detail,

which caught the imagination of all classes and which earned its copyists in every branch of the decorative arts from architecture to cabinet-making. Yet had Adam introduced merely a set of fashionable frills and graces his influence would have been negligible and he would never have unseated the venerable Palladians who had been securely in the saddle for half a century or more. It was the logic of his approach to living and planning that appealed to the Age of Reason. When as a young man he made his tour of Italy and Dalmatia in 1754–58, he saw more than the classical features, the temple architecture of Rome, which had so captivated his predecessors. He questioned the sense of turning every sort of building into a variation on a pagan temple; he studied other sources than the textbook prototypes and found evidence that the ancient world had a domestic vernacular quite different from the formal façades of temple and forum.

For his details, too, he looked to fresh sources and was inspired by the decorative designs of the Etruscan civilization as well as by later Italian models. Educated taste was ripe for his innovations when he returned to England and began to practise as an architect and speculator. It was certainly the movement in all his work that appealed most strongly, the movement in his delicate plaster patterns and in his subtle interior planning. By variety of shapes in his rooms, by changes of levels and planes, he infused new vigour into the stereotyped London house. His own definition of movement in architecture cannot be bettered. 'Movement,' he wrote, 'is defined as meant to express the rise and fall, the advance and recess, with other diversity of forms, in the different parts of a building. For the rising and falling, advancing and receding, with the convexity and concavity, and other forms of the great parts, have the same effect in architecture, that hill and dale, foreground and distance, swelling and sinking, have in landscape.'

Yet the Adam brothers did not play fast and loose with the fronts of their buildings. Their pilaster treatment on the Adelphi blocks was certainly new and brought down the condemnation of a critic like Horace Walpole, but it was not revolutionary. Their town houses conformed, externally at least, with the accepted disciplines of Georgian taste. They respected the flush frontage of an eighteenth-century street. However, Robert Adam had started something that can now be recognized as the progenitor of many a Regency experiment. Where Adam fought shy of 'movement' on the street frontage, Nash, the great Regency architect, gloried in it. His terraces in Regent's Park are as different from the reserve of Adam's Mansfield Street or Chandos House as the Prince Regent was from George III. But Nash must have owed, without necessarily acknowledging it, his liberation from the architectural strait-jacket to Adam's daring innovations. In two minor respects also the Regency period owed much to Adam's researches. His enthusiasm for Etruscan detail set minds working on new lines and undermined faith in the standard Palladian ornament. Following him others looked behind Roman forms and rediscovered the Greek orders and Greek patterns and they even played with Oriental and other bizarre motifs. Adam was also the first architect of importance to popularize the use of a stucco or plaster facing on brick. He seldom covered a whole house with it, but he used it widely across his ground floors below the principal rooms, and found it a convenient medium for his decorative pilasters. So plaster, too, which is often taken as the hall-mark of Regency architecture, dates back to before the turn of the century.

For all these reasons it has been necessary in this introduction to Regency architecture to look back into the eighteenth century, to recognize the permanent values that run right through the two



Downing College, Cambridge, built in the Grecian style after the designs of William Wilkins, 1807-21

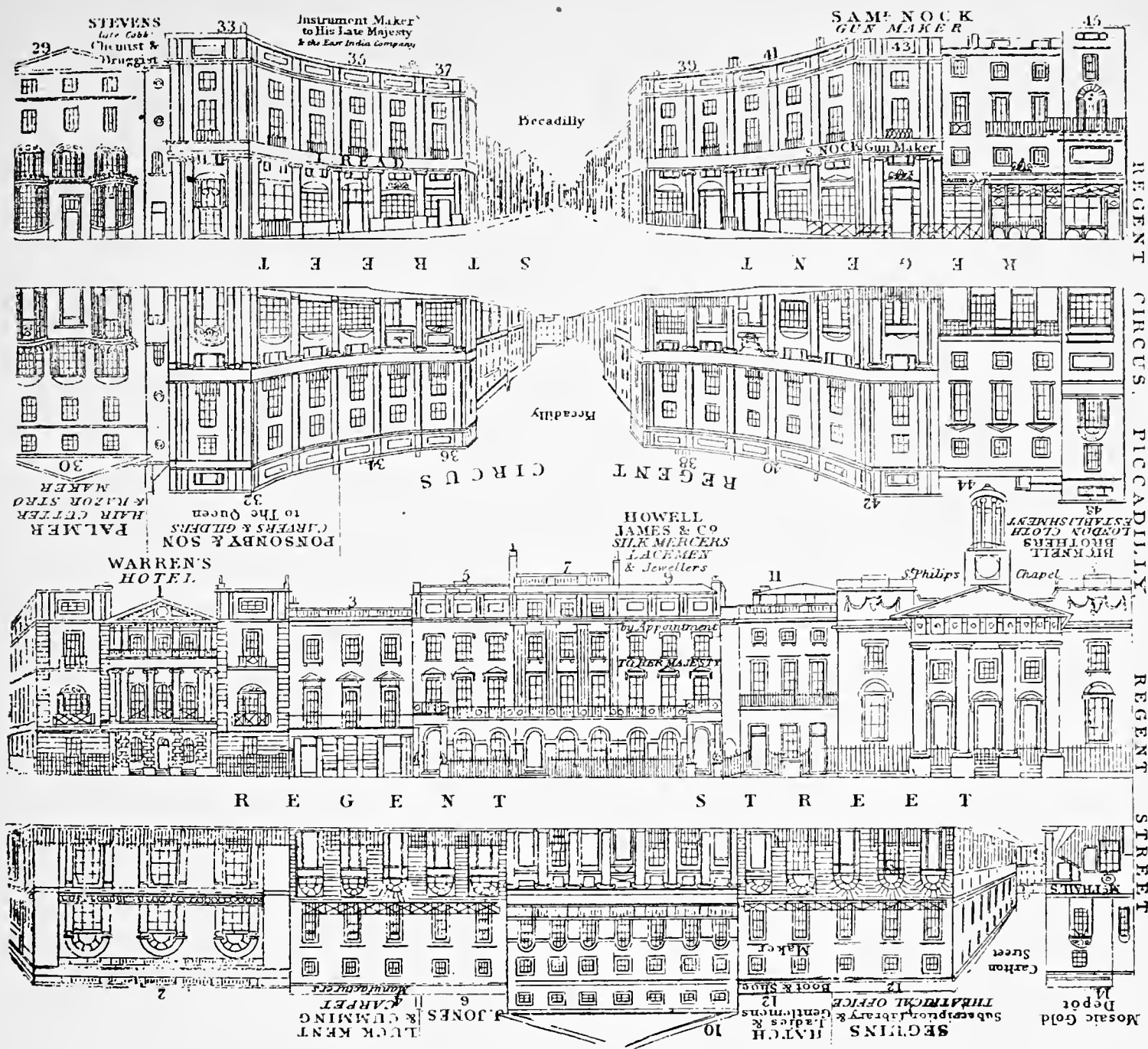
periods and to see the influences that produced such startling glories and at the same time such serene little façades as grace the opening years of the nineteenth century. Compare the sombre procession of a Harley Street with the gay cavalcade of old Regent Street and you will see both the similarities and the differences of the two great periods of our domestic building and you will get somewhere near to an answer to the questions we asked before Robert Adam intervened.

First, how was Georgian proportion translated into the Regency style? The answer is that, apart from individual vagaries of taste, the Regency builders observed the same general rules of proportion. Behind the dressing of columns and arches and porticoes, the terraces in Regent's Park or the Brunswick Terraces at Hove or even the later

squares and curves of Belgravia and Kemp Town, Brighton, do broadly reveal the same balance between openings and wall surface, between storeys and roof height as can be observed in the earlier terraces of Bloomsbury or Bath. The differences were not in proportion but in architectural features and, the purist would say, in knowledge (or lack of it) of the correct uses of classical ornament. Nash has often been accused of ignorance or carelessness in his handling of detail. He mixed his metaphors, putting a Roman order above a Greek or jumping from one to the other in the wrong sequence. These foibles shocked many of his contemporaries who still looked to Sir William Chambers, the last great Palladian, as their master. But today, having lived with the whole scrapbook of competing styles bequeathed to us by the Victorians, we can view with tolerance (confirmed no doubt by ignorance) such academic slips and can still look upon Nash and the many architects and builders who collaborated with him as men of taste, energy and vision. Their taste they had inherited; their energy was instinct in the period they lived through, a period of danger and successful war; their vision was the product of many cross-currents, of the new romanticism that revolted against the formality of the Georgian Age, of fresh ideas blowing across the Channel, of royal indulgence of an extravagant hobby and inevitably of the wishful thinking that goes with the turn of a century.

And what of neighbourliness? How did the Regency builders react to the Georgian conceptions of neighbourly living? The answer is of the ancient order of Caesar and Brutus being very much alike, especially Brutus. The Regency carried the idea of the community a step further. The neighbourhood unit became more expansive, embracing wider views, greater areas and taking in the passer-by and the stranger at the gate. The terraces in Regent's Park, Carlton House Terraces,





From LONDON STREET VIEWS published by John Tallis, 1838-40

Brunswick Square, Hove, and even Nash's Regent Street were neighbourly conceptions, but on a grander, more generous scale than the compact units of eighteenth-century Mayfair or Bloomsbury. Nash's idea that the beaux and the bachelors should take suites and apartments above the shops in Regent Street, from which they would quiz

the crowds and greet their friends in the street below, was an uninhibited extension of the Georgian idea (borrowed perhaps from the Palais Royal in Paris). His setting of the Terraces in Regent's Park, particularly his first and unexecuted plan, shows a brave approach to community life. He planned not one square or one terrace but a whole garden city where thousands, not hundreds, would enjoy the rich pattern of parkland and plaster palaces. It was planning by and for a generation of extroverts and the prince of the extroverts was the Regent himself, whose enthusiasm (and ownership of Crown lands) made it all possible.

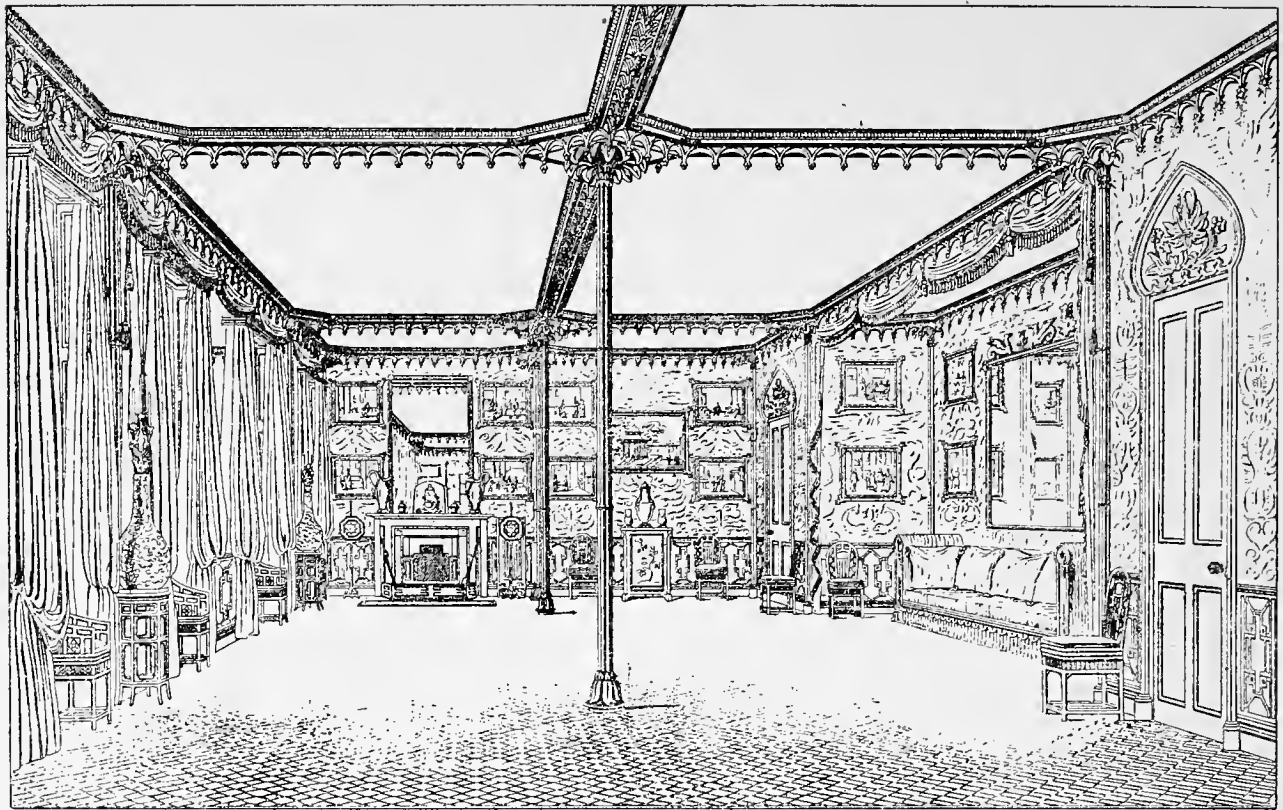
That answers our third question, for Regency building was, like Georgian, speculative, but again on a grander more risky scale. There never had been such a speculation as the Regent's London and Nash braved personal bankruptcy more than once in his battle for his great West End plan. He carried the whole burden of the Regent Street quadrant himself rather than see a fine architectural conception jeopardized for the lack of a backer. We discourage our architects today from having financial interests in the erection of a building. It is fortunate for us that Nash was restrained by no such professional etiquette, for though we have lost his original Regent Street we still have the fine sweep of the Quadrant to lighten the heavy hand of our own generation.

The reader, by now, may have got the impression that Regency architecture was a procession of palatial terraces, columned and porticoed and stuccoed, leading from one royal park to another or a repetition at the seaside of the same grandiose conventions. It was not all like that. There were three kinds of Regency building (if we may exclude the romantic efforts of the Gothic revivalists, whose influence



was not yet extending much beyond a few churches and mock-medieval castles). The first and best remembered was this 'royal' or terrace architecture. Examples are to be found in Hove and Brighton as well as in London. The same may be seen in Cheltenham and Leamington. They are recognizable for their stucco façades, for the boldness of their classical architecture, their columns and capitals, and their generally palatial air. Their architects so devised them that, seen from a distance, they might be mistaken for single palaces instead of rows of identical houses. In street planning each block between side streets would be treated as one composition (if the architect could find enough clients to take up all the plots between the side streets). Old Regent Street was once a succession of such palatial compositions. Though no two were identical each was long enough to carry the eye comfortably on to the next, and, because the Regency still respected the basic canons of Georgian taste, the individual compositions were disciplined to conform with the character and scale of the street as a whole. This was not surprising in the case of Regent's Park and Regent Street since all the front elevations were subject to the approval of the one architect, but the same consistency is characteristic of all large-scale Regency developments like Brighton, Hove and Cheltenham.

This discipline survived the reign of George IV. Belgravia in London, mostly built a few years later, is still uniform in scale, though heavier and more solemn as befitted the reaction following the irresponsibilities of the Regency. As the century wore on this uniformity degenerated into the gloomy monotony of Kensington or Lancaster Gate and Bayswater, where bleak stucco terraces and squares were rushed up by men who had lost the joyful touch but still felt bound by traditions they did not understand. These acres of stucco man-



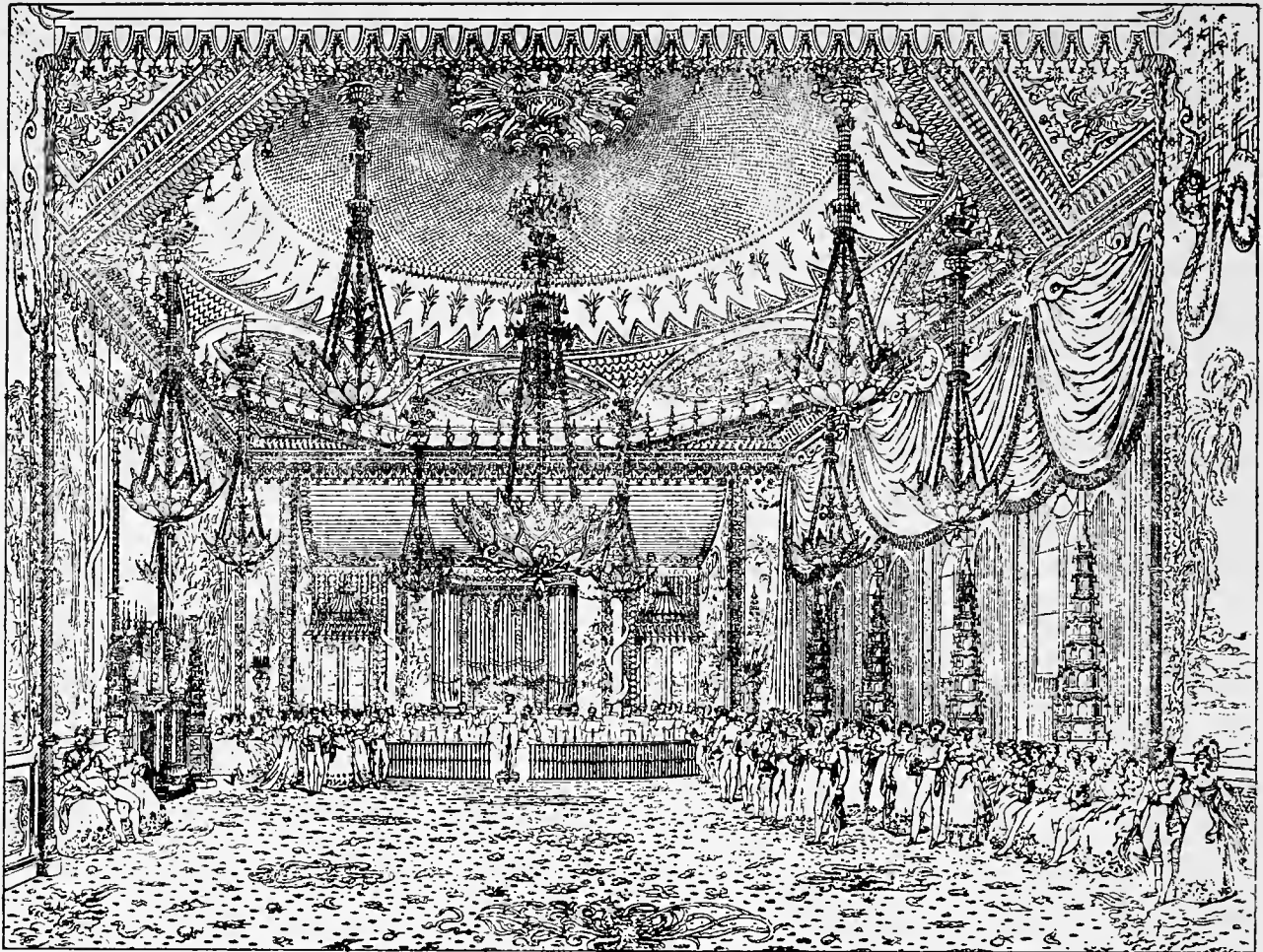
The Royal Pavilion, Brighton : the Red Drawing Room. One of a suite of lesser rooms on the west side of the Pavilion. The grand suite on the east front was first shown to the public in February 1820

sions, taller by a couple of storeys than their Regency prototypes, clumsy and restless in their detail, present today an insoluble problem to landlord and tenant alike. To pull them down piecemeal, two houses here or half a dozen there, and to build instead roseate blocks of flats in mongrel Georgian will leave London no better off, for, whatever their faults, these Victorian acres were attempts at urban architecture and in their layout have a certain regularity and planning. If you half close your eyes on a sunny day Queen's Gate becomes a remarkably fine street when the stucco is newly painted and even the cavernous severities of Ennismore Gardens, when the paint is fresh, offer a secure urbanity which subsequent builders have altogether lost.

Most people connect Regency stucco with fresh ivory white or cream paint. There are few finer sights in England than the Regent's

Park Terraces gleaming in the evening sunshine through the fresh green of the trees in the Park, or the Brunswick Terraces at Hove sparkling on a blue day, behind the lawns of the sea front. We can see them, not today, of course, but yesterday before the war and tomorrow, after the restrictions, as Nash and his contemporaries never saw them. In his day the stucco was painted in imitation of stone and the stone he wished to reproduce was not the splendid Portland stone which weathers white to the wind and the sun, but Bath stone which turns yellow and dull with age. Contemporary prints of old Regent Street rarely show this. The artists who drew them had a sunnier eye than the architect who built them and public taste soon followed the artists, with no loss to the architecture.

The second facet of Regency building need not delay us long. I put it second because it, too, drew its inspiration from royal whims of grandeur. The great example of this style, if it can be called a style, is the Pavilion at Brighton, a discreet seaside Georgian house remodelled by Nash into a species of Taj Mahal. No account of Regency architecture would be complete without mention of it. Fortunately, it had few copyists though one builder in a Brighton back street did foolishly try to Indianize his roof line with a dome or two. The Regent commissioned the Pavilion for his own enjoyment and probably never gave a thought to whether or not others would follow suit. He did nothing by halves and the Pavilion bears him witness today. If we take it in the spirit in which it was built, remembering that it was never intended to be more than a seaside retreat where the Regent and his court might, in relative seclusion and in appropriate surroundings, indulge their exotic and extravagant tastes, we can also enjoy the exuberance of its domes and minarets, the rich fantasy of its great ballroom and banqueting hall



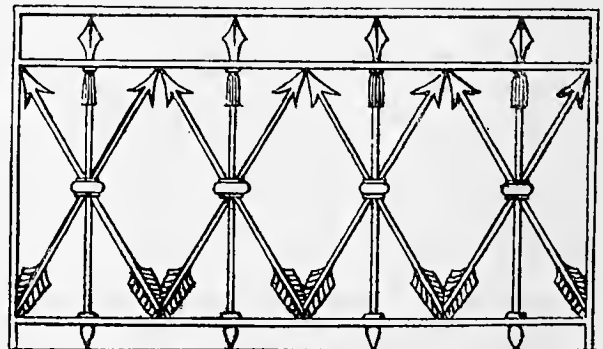
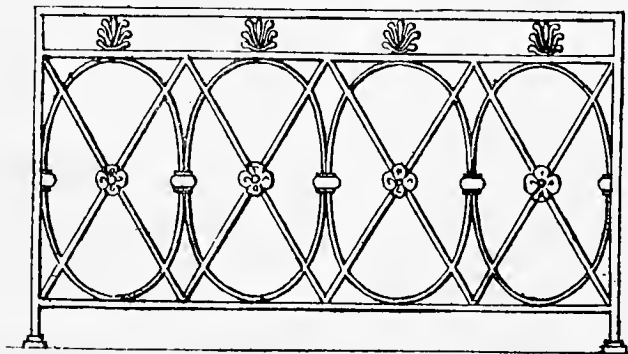
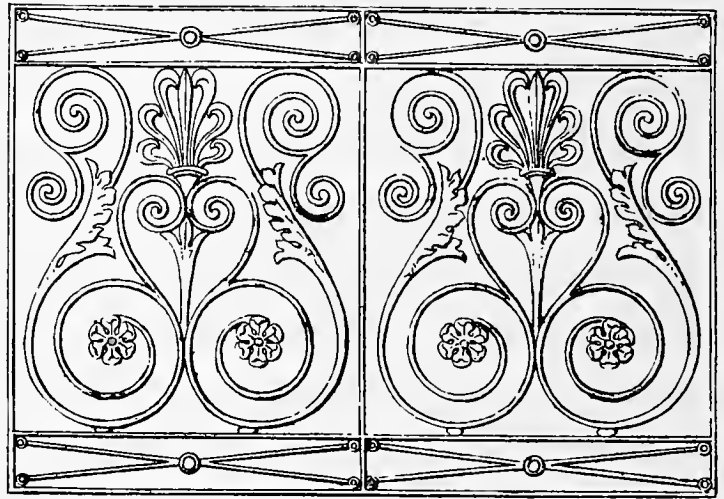
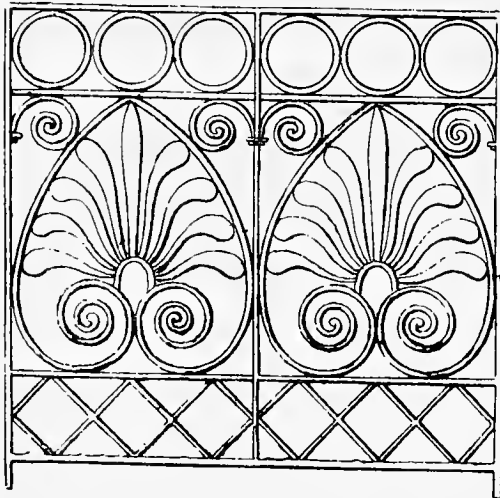
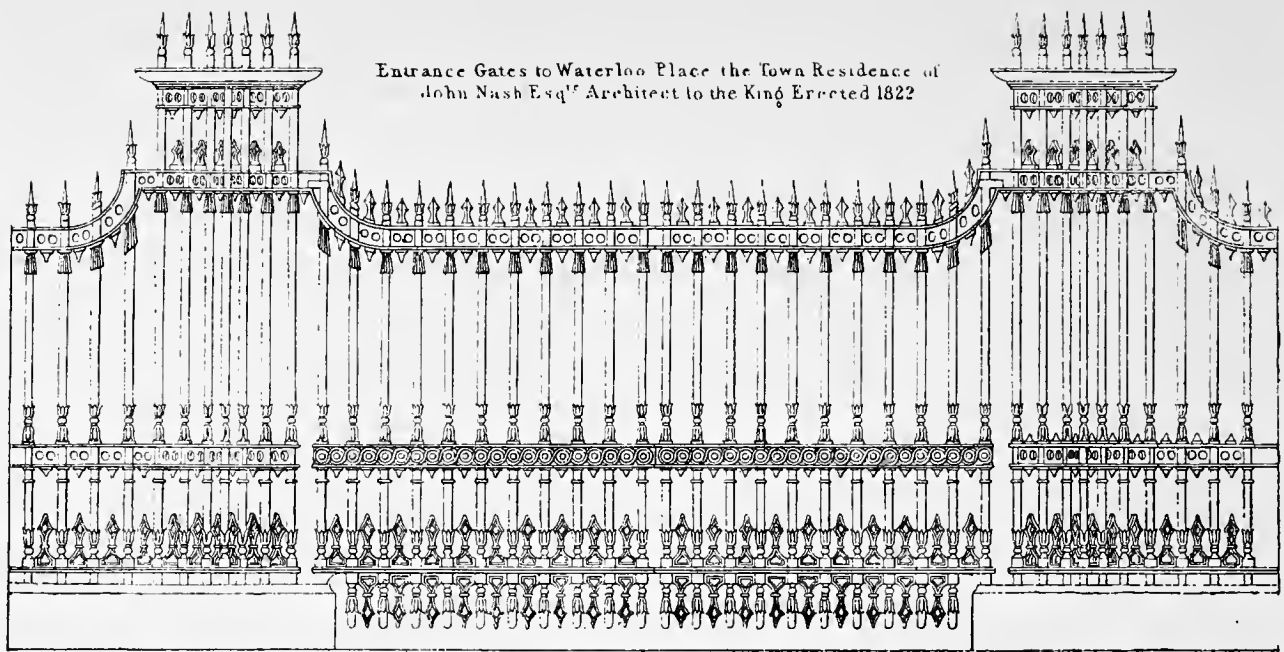
The Royal Pavilion, Brighton : the Music Room. The first grand ball was held in this room in February 1821. Its classical frame is obscured by a lavish overlay of heterogeneous decoration

and the humour of cast iron palm trees supporting the kitchen vault.

So little were the Regent's contemporaries impressed by his pavilion that the third and most widely executed style of Regency building could not imaginably have been less Oriental. Across the street from where this is being written are four small London houses, built, not strictly during the Regency, but before the end of George IV's reign. They are not stuccoed from ground to roof, but they might well have been. They are typical small town houses of the period, four in a row, each with a gentle bowed window on the ground floor, semi-rusticated stucco up to the level of the first floor balcony and, very typical of the period, intricate cast iron railings to the balconies, incorporating two

common Regency designs—the sloping and repeating letter S and the anthemion or Greek honeysuckle pattern. The windows are Georgian and sashed but spaced, if anything, more widely. The front entrance is a simple roundheaded opening with a cast iron fanlight above the six-panelled door. Inside the builder spent more of his money on the front rooms than on the back, a usual speculative feature. The doors are framed with fluted or reed mouldings which meet in plain square panels at the two top corners. These square panels, in a richer house, would have been filled with some decoration like a rosette or the popular lion's mask so often seen on drawer knobs of Regency furniture, but they would rarely have been dressed up to be a capital to the vertical pilasters. Above the architrave is a simple, flat cornice. The same theme is repeated for the inside architraves of the front windows (which are of course still fitted with folding shutters) and it is seen again adapted for the mantelpiece and fireplace surround. The classical origins of all these features are not in doubt. The flat fluted pilasters would earlier have been finished with a capital. The horizontal fluting above the door takes the place of the frieze. The flat cornice has replaced the earlier pediment or segmental arch, but the whole classical entablature is still there in a form of Regency shorthand. In the small houses the ensemble is modest and repressed, but the same family likeness is recognizable in the door architraves of grander buildings, for instance, in the great drawing-room of the Athenaeum Club built by Decimus Burton in 1830.

The simplicity of the smaller Regency building was a happy economy forced upon the period by the costly Napoleonic wars. Though the Regent's taste was for grandeur and palatial effect the work had to be carried out in the cheapest materials, stucco for stone and cast iron cores for the columns. In the back streets and smaller

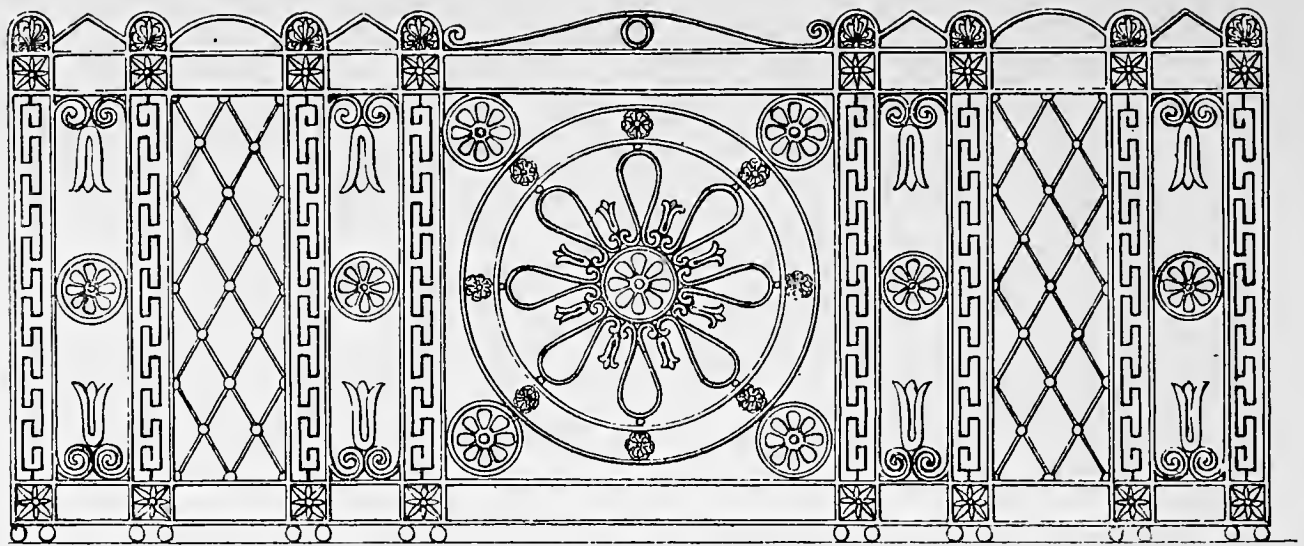


Designs from THE ORNAMENTAL METAL WORKER'S DIRECTORY by L. N. Cottingham, 1824  
Above: entrance gates; centre: window guards; below: balcony railings



villas the same economies were made, any decoration being put into the smaller features like balconies and trellis verandahs with curved metal sheeting roofs. These small stucco villas seen in great numbers in Cheltenham, Weymouth, Plymouth or Leamington are as typical of the period as the plaster palaces or reproductions of Greek temples and are today the more precious for the model solution they offer to a generation attempting to rebuild at the minimum cost. The Regency builders relied on shape and spacing for their effect. A shape which never grows wearisome was the Regency bow front, often carried right up the house. Hundreds of these can be seen in the side streets of Brighton, one after the other, each peeping down towards the narrow view of the sea, and each adorned with its delicate cast iron balcony, often with a crinolined roof supported on trellis piers to keep the rain off.

The bow front could be either segmental or semi-hexagonal, it could run up the whole front of the house or appear only at the ground level or even to carry forward the first floor window from the face of the house. It was used not only in connected terraces but also on individual free-standing villas. A good example of the detached bow-fronted villa is to be seen at Havering-atte-Bower in Essex. The windows are very widely spaced and the expanse of curved wall surface between them is relieved by unobtrusive flat pilasters capped by independent cornice projections, which are not carried round the whole front except in the form of a slightly raised stucco band which divides the top storey from the principal floor. The whole rounded form is covered by generous overhanging eaves, a Regency departure from the Georgian parapet. The first floor window lets on to a delicate iron balcony which is supported by a trellis arch to provide a verandah to the ground floor french window. This villa, like so many of its

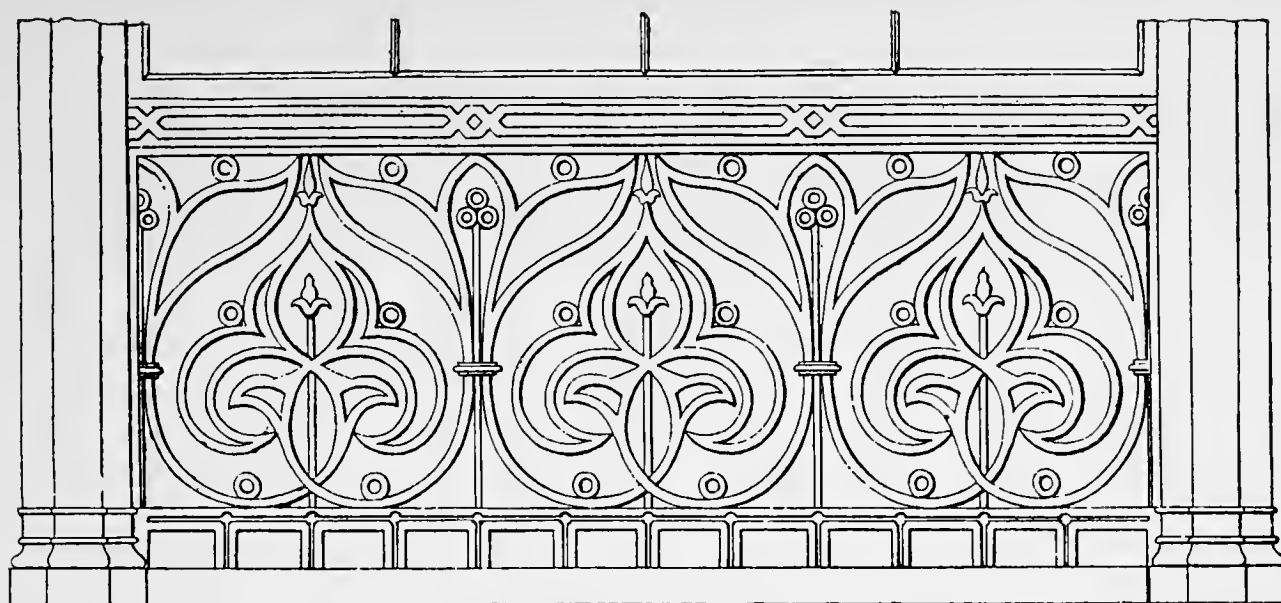


Balcony railings by Cottingham

contemporaries, relies on clear wall surfaces, bold shape and delicate iron work. It is reproduced here on page 90.

A good example of economical urban building is Nash's Munster Square, to the east of Regent's Park. The spacing of the single windows of each house gives breadth and architectural solidity to an otherwise humble square. The windows are surrounded externally by projecting stucco architraves, a feature much mishandled later in the century and one which, against a background of stock brick looks clumsy and obtrusive in middle-class developments like Thurloe Square, South Kensington. But here again the critic is likely to be confronted by earlier examples from the Palladian era. Did not old Chesterfield House, by Isaac Ware, or Melbourne House (Albany), by Sir William Chambers, have external stone architraves round their window openings contrasting with the stock brick walls? The test is that the Georgians did not apply mansion features to the small town house in a street or square, whereas the Victorians overloaded each unit in a terrace with borrowed snob appeal. The first floor windows in Nash's Munster Square are provided with Regency cast iron balconies which brightly offset the plain stucco walls between. The door-

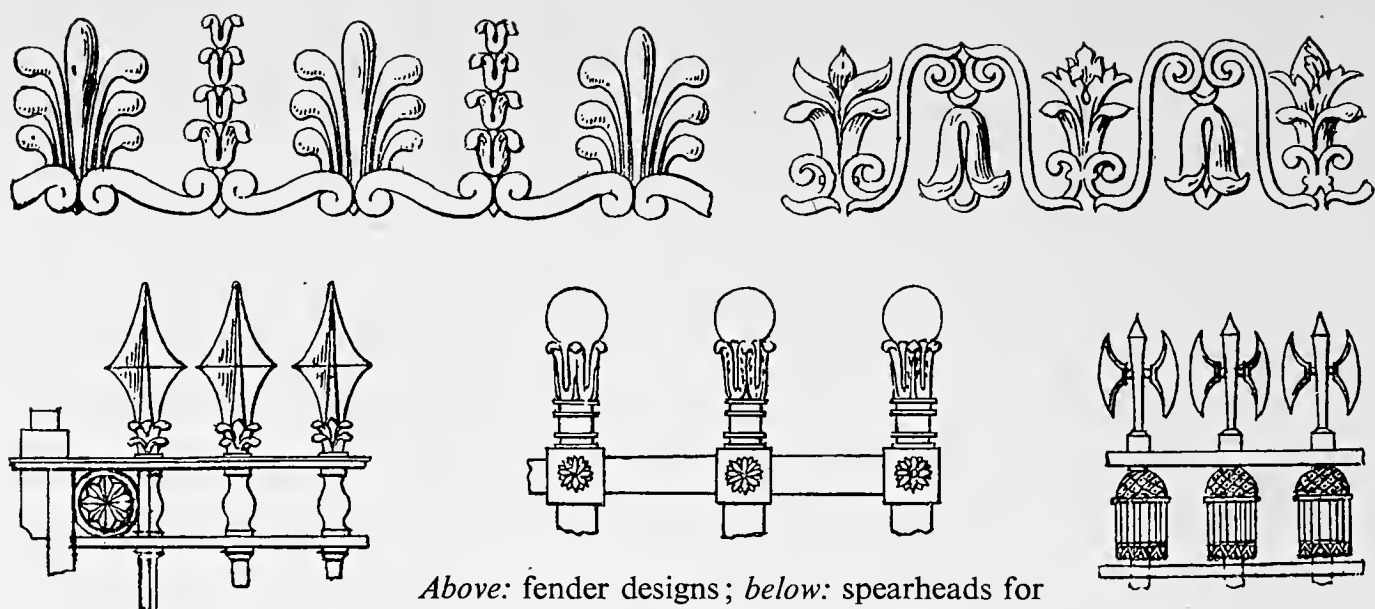




Guard iron under shop window, by Cottingham

ways, like the ground floor windows, are round-headed and the tympana are filled with cast iron fanlights. In a less modest neighbourhood the doorways might have been provided with solemn Greek porches and the door panels surrounded with large nailheads or studs.

Other characteristic features of Regency villa architecture find their origins in the new and cheap materials available, especially the mass-produced stucco. Whereas the Georgians made little of their cornice line below their parapets, the Regency builders found they could economically emphasize these features and increased the overall depth of their cornices by applying several horizontal bands of mouldings. It did not take long for this treatment to degenerate into idle clichés like the White Rock Terrace at Hastings, built in 1846. Here everything has gone to seed, the over-abundant cornices, the clumsy architraves, ugly shaped windows and cheap-jack Corinthian pilaster capitals. In larger Regency houses and public buildings each window on the principal floor would probably be fitted with its own projecting cornice above the stucco architrave. Another use of stucco was for decorative classical friezes in low relief, usually below the attic storey, as in Nash's United Services Club and Burton's Athenaeum.



*Above: fender designs; below: spearheads for iron fences, gates, etc., by Cottingham*

Internally, too, this cheap plaster allowed for repeating patterns, usually of Greek origin (the fretted key pattern was popular), round the ceiling cornices and in the larger houses round or oval plaster panels, framing Greek or Egyptian figures and symbols, would be let in to relieve the broad surfaces. A popular ceiling form of the period was the shallow segmental vault with coffered panels. This can be seen in even relatively modest houses like those in Bedford Street, Liverpool (built about 1840–45, but, allowing for the time lag between north and south, still Regency in style). Though the normal window was still Georgian and sashed, many Regency villas have windows with two narrow glazed panels down either side of the Georgian sash, forming a three-leafed window with two stuccoed mullions. Aesthetically this was a dangerous innovation and was successful only in individual houses. It was copied by the next generation for terrace houses and accounts for much of the clumsiness of Victorian fenestration. A more effective modification of the Georgian sash window was the Regency disposition of the actual window bars. They are still as thin as those of Robert Adam, but narrow side lights are set in a few

inches from the frame. The panes between may then be larger than the normal Georgian rectangles, but they are still a long way from the unsightly glazing of plate glass. It was a glazier's variation of detail and did not affect the shape or proportion of the window opening.

The glazier's art was brought to a high perfection in the many Regency shopfronts which in town and country were so typical of the Jane Austen period. Not many have survived the introduction of plate glass, but the gently bowed fronts and the delicate bars between the small square panes of those that have survived should certainly attract more custom today than the vulgar expansiveness of their plate glass neighbours. Some of the best are in the small villages of Dorset. Cerne Abbas has two splendid examples. London has a few left. There are two good ones in Sydney Street, Chelsea, for instance, and a series in Woburn Walk in the parish of St Pancras (now sadly dilapidated). The charm of this row in Woburn Walk was in the repetition of a simple formula. Each merchant had identical window space and depth of fascia board. There could be no competition between them in such a setting except in the quality of their merchandise. Window dressing and advertising lettering were at a discount in those days. The same Regency detail, moreover, repeats all down the row in a lightly moulded frieze, capping the windows and the unobtrusively pilastered doorways. This frieze is made up of alternating anthemions of slightly different design, possibly cribbed from the cornice frieze of St Pancras Church. Above each shop window is a cast iron balcony of simple lattice and fleur-de-lis pattern. The house windows above the shops illustrate, too, the three-leaf effect already described; the mullions dividing the side lights from the central panels, in this case being of wood, are therefore set back four inches from the stuccoed wall surface in accordance with the Building Act of 1709, which was still in

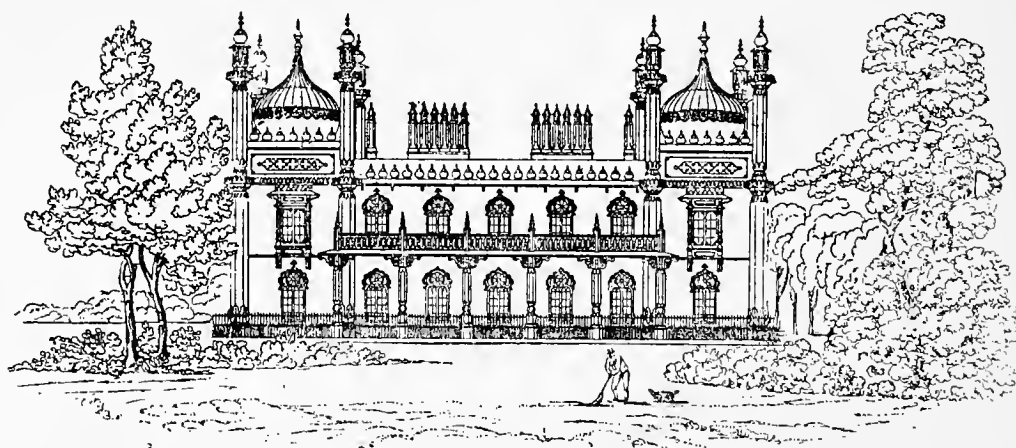
force. This Act forbade the exposure on or near the face of a building of any wooden frame or architrave. The arrival of non-inflammable stucco often encouraged the Regency builders to do what up till then had been possible only for rich clients who could afford stone.

The object of this introduction is not to describe the details of Regency architecture but to give a general impression of the range and chief characteristics of the period. Academically the Regency saw a reversion to Greek (and sometimes Egyptian) forms; economically it was a period of cheap building (the flying splinters of the 'blitz' have revealed the cast iron cores of the squat Doric colonnades of the Carlton House Terraces and the flanking columns of Drury Lane Theatre) and artistically a period of conservative revolt from the Georgian strait-jacket.

There is not so much left that we can afford to be prodigal with our Regency buildings. The Regent's Park Terraces appear to be reprieved for a few years, the Brunswick Terraces at Hove are protected by an old Act of Parliament and are said to be safe till 1960, but who will defend the smaller streets of unpretentious houses which are just as representative of the period? The war has taken its toll of the Regency in Plymouth, Exeter, Weymouth and London. Cheltenham was more fortunate and that faithful watchdog, the Georgian Group, has issued a valuable report on this rare example of Regency town-planning, which offers such a 'happy union of town and country' and in one city provides so many examples of the different facets of Regency building, from civic architecture in the grand manner, through classical squares and terraces to the smaller detached or semi-detached villas. Throughout Cheltenham, too, one sees the superb ironwork of the period in balconies, trellis porches and railings, all the work of local craftsmen who had retained the skill and traditions of their fathers.

The Regency has been too often dismissed as a bastard period of jerry-stucco, cheap and shoddy in construction, inconsequent in its architecture. In fact it was the fine Indian Summer of the eighteenth century, the colourful sunset before the blanket of mid-Victorian night. It was a period of adventure and experiment in new materials and new designs and in it we can look for the germs of our present-day revolt against the platitudinous reproductions of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century eclecticism. The plain surfaces that Sir John Soane played with in his Bank of England halls, the simple shapes of the unpretentious villas, the economy of detail and the articulation of volume and groupings demanded more artistry in the architect than any amount of reproduction, however scholarly, which littered the nineteenth century, and, possibly, more artistry than the respectful regimentation of the pure Georgian period. The Regency, indeed, was not only a great age of building, successfully mixing 'the monumental and the unpretentious', but it was also a great age of town planning. The Regency planner did more than execute functional street lay-outs and traffic arteries and processional ways. He planned in three dimensions with an eye to the architecture in relation to his plan. The following passage from the Georgian Group's report on Cheltenham points this combination of planning and architecture: 'The notable grace and dignity of the early nineteenth-century quarters of the town depend to a great extent on the consistency of scale displayed by the buildings in all their various categories. The impressive scale of the larger groups of buildings and palatial villas, whose proportions are based on the classic orders, is admirably related to the spacious layout of streets and open gardens about them, while the more intimate scale of the many charming small terraces and unpretentious villas is equally well proportioned to their surroundings.' In London we have no

quarter that illustrates so well this combination of scales in Regency building, but we have both ends of the scale separately—Regent's Park and Carlton House Terraces in the grand manner, and Park Villages East and West and St John's Wood, the latter a little later but still Regency in feeling, in the villa or garden city manner. The detached or semi-detached houses of St John's Wood are still in many ways admirable and are the worthy forebears of a worthless issue. The force of this garden city idea was irresistible. It carried on long after the restraints of good taste, proportion and neighbourliness had been swept away and the ugly face of profit and speculation had spewed out its suburban balderdash across the length and breadth of England.



The Royal Pavilion, Brighton : north front

## SOME REGENCY ARCHITECTS

THERE ARE PROBABLY only half a dozen names of architects which are commonly associated with Regency architecture—John Nash, the architect of Regent's Park and Regent Street; Decimus Burton, his young collaborator who built feverishly in his youth but was rarely heard of again; Henry Holland, an older man who died before the Regency proper was proclaimed but who, as architect of Carlton House, crystallized much of the classical magnificence of the period and considerably influenced the Regent's taste; Sir John Soane, that intellectual and individual artist whose fanaticism so confused his contemporaries and whose teaching so stimulated his pupils; George Basevi, D'Israeli's cousin, the architect of Belgravia; and perhaps most typical of his period, John Buonarotti Papworth, who built so much of Cheltenham.

Though these are the outstanding Regency figures there were other great names which overlapped the period—James Wyatt and George Dance, the younger, for instance, who were born before the middle of the eighteenth century, but who lived on into the Regency; Professor Cockerell and Sir Robert Smirke, both great figures in the classical tradition, who received their largest commissions after George IV was dead; and, right in the period, there was Sir Jeffrey Wyatville, who, though appointed Architect to the King by George IV, is known mainly for his additions to Windsor Castle which were certainly not in the accepted Regency style. In printing the following biographical notes it is inevitable that some injustice will be done to those other names which were well known in their day, those collaborators of Nash or pupils of Soane who up and down the country built so many Regency terraces and houses—names such as G. S. Repton, the son of Humphry Repton, the landscape gardener; Robert Abraham, who built the County Fire Office in Piccadilly Circus; Philip Hardwick, who collaborated with Basevi in Belgravia; the Inwoods, father and son; Henry E. Kendall, the architect who built so extensively for T. R. Kemp, the Brighton speculator; Charles Busby and H. Wilds, those unrecorded figures who left us the magnificent Brunswick Square and Terraces at Hove; and those lesser lights of the great architectural families who faithfully worked at their professions in the shadows of their fathers or elder brothers—the several Wyatts (Benjamin Dean or Philip Wyatt, for instance), the youngest George Dance, Michael Gandy, who practised in Ireland, or Sydney Smirke who, although he rebuilt the Oxford Street Pantheon, was never able to catch up with his brother Robert. And were there space in this short book accounts should be given of the successful careers of the speculative builders of the period—James Burton, T. R. Kemp, Pitt of Cheltenham and the great Thomas Cubitt—who knew enough of architecture to employ the right men but not so much that they dared dispense with the services of an architect—an arrogance that has marked succeeding generations of speculators, with the disastrous results with which we are now familiar.

### GEORGE DANCE (1741–1825)

FIFTH SON OF George Dance (1700–68), the architect of the Mansion House, and father of a third architect George and of Nathaniel, the painter. He inherited his father's position as Clerk of Works of the Corporation of the City of London, built All Hallows Church, London Wall, at the age of 24 and Newgate Prison, on the site of the present Old Bailey, three years later. This was his most notable work, and in its day was an unorthodox and impressive design, which owed much to a study of Piranesi (to whom more than one of the Regency architects admitted his indebtedness). Less successful was the Gothic façade which Dance gave to the City Guildhall. After 1798 he forsook his profession and concentrated on chalk drawing and portraits of prominent men and Academicians of his period. He was himself one of the original Academicians. Perhaps the chief reason for including him in this list of Regency architects is that through his work at All Hallows and through his personal friendship he influenced and encouraged John Soane to set out on his successful career. Soane started his working life as an errand boy for Dance and was later taken by him into his drawing office. It was Dance, too, who sent Soane to serve his apprenticeship with Henry Holland.

### HENRY HOLLAND (1746–1806)

SON OF A builder and son-in-law of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the landscape gardener, his first important commission was to build Claremont House, Esher, for Lord Clive. This brought him valuable patronage and a long connection with the great Whig families. In 1778 he built Brooks's Club, St James's Street, the meeting-place for the leading Whigs. Through this association he was introduced to the Prince of Wales and soon began rebuilding the derelict Carlton House which had been made over to the Prince for his London residence. Between 1787–90 there rose in Pall Mall London's most splendid palace, with a vast Corinthian portico and a long Ionic colonnade screening the palace from the street. This palace survived its architect by only twenty years. It was pulled down to make way for Waterloo Place and Nash's Carlton House Terraces and its columns were incorporated in the new National Gallery. Its stabling and riding house survived till 1858. In the same year as he started on Carlton House, Holland began redesigning the Marine Pavilion at Brighton which had been leased to the Prince of Wales. This, too, was soon to be recast out of all recognition, but Holland's cupola may have suggested the Indian domes of Repton and Nash. In 1791 Holland rebuilt Drury Lane Theatre for R. B. Sheridan, but this was destroyed by fire in 1809. In 1808 a similar fate befell his alterations (1794) to Covent Garden Theatre. In 1795 he built Southill House, Bedfordshire, for Samuel Whitbread, the brewer and the friend of the Whigs. His last work, completed posthumously, was the Athenaeum in Ingram Street, Glasgow. Though many of Holland's major buildings did not long survive him, a private speculation which he started in 1780 has left a lasting mark on



London. In that year he bought 100 acres of land around the village of Chelsea and laid out Sloane Street, Cadogan Place and Hans Place. He was also the architect of the Albany in Piccadilly.

#### JAMES WYATT (1746–1813)

MEMBER OF A family which produced many architects and artists, this son of a Staffordshire timber merchant was taken to Italy by Lord Bagot to improve his health and returned to London in 1766 to build up a flourishing architectural practice. His most striking London building was the Pantheon (1770–72) in Oxford Street, an elaborate and fashionable 'winter garden' which included assembly rooms and a stage for dramatic performances. Although this was destroyed by fire twenty years later it established Wyatt's prosperity. He was made Surveyor-General in 1796 in succession to Sir William Chambers. Architecturally he was unprincipled and would as happily design in the Gothic as in the Greek or Italian styles. In 1795 he built the enormous Gothic fantasy at Fonthill Abbey and made many alterations and restorations to English cathedrals, which earned him from Pugin the nickname of 'Wyatt, the Destroyer'. His influence on building in the early years of the nineteenth century came from his official position as Chief Government Architect rather than from his own merits as a designer. His eldest son, Benjamin Dean Wyatt (1775–1850), was employed in 1811 on rebuilding Drury Lane Theatre (Holland's theatre having been burned down in 1809) and in 1830 he designed the Duke of York's Column. James's younger son, Philip, collaborated with Benjamin Dean in altering Apsley House for the Duke of Wellington. His nephew, Jeffrey Wyatt, became better known as Sir Jeffrey Wyatville. James Wyatt was killed in a coach accident on the Bath Road in 1813.

#### JOHN NASH (1752–1835)

THIS SON OF a humble millwright became the most fashionable architect of his day, the friend and adviser of the Prince Regent, the owner of a splendid mansion and picture gallery in Regent Street and of a castle on the Isle of Wight. He did more than has any other single architect to change the face of London. To him we owe the layout of Regent's Park, Regent Street, Piccadilly Circus, Lower Regent Street, the Suffolk Street development, Carlton House Terrace, and much of Buckingham Palace. Originally Nash was a pupil of Sir Robert Taylor, a successful mid-eighteenth century London architect, but he appears to have given up the practice of architecture for some years, until in 1793 his friend, Samuel Pepys Cockerell (a descendant of the diarist), persuaded him to start in local practice in Carmarthenshire. This practice prospered and commissions in Ireland followed, which led to connections with the nobility and his return to London in partnership with Humphry Repton, the landscape gardener. Repton possibly introduced Nash to the Prince of Wales. In 1798, Nash married 'an ambitious young woman who is supposed to have engaged in dangerous liaisons at Carlton House'. However that may have been, Nash never looked back from the year

of his marriage. In 1806 he became an architect to the Office of Woods and Forests, and in 1809 his scheme for the Marylebone Park development was accepted. In 1811 these lands reverted to the Crown and the 'Metropolitan Improvements' of the Regency were under way. Nash, already nearing 70, either designed or supervised all the Regent's Park building except for Cornwall and Clarence Terraces and the Colosseum. In 1813 the Regent Street Act of Parliament launched the greatest piece of London town-planning since Wren, and in about ten years the street was built. Nash had the collaboration of other architects for individual blocks in the street, but the plan and direction were his. In 1825 work was begun by Nash on the conversion of Buckingham House into Buckingham Palace. This building was Nash's least successful commission and parts of the palace were pulled down during his lifetime. George IV died in 1830 and the building was taken out of Nash's hands and given to Edward Blore. Nash's other palace for his royal patron, the Pavilion at Brighton, was completed in 1823. The King never visited it after 1827. Among the more important individual buildings which Nash contributed to London's West End were the Haymarket Theatre; the Opera House in the Haymarket (destroyed in 1893); the United Services Club, Pall Mall; the East Wing of Carlton House Terrace; the Royal Mews; All Souls' Church, Langham Place; and the Duke of Clarence's house, St James's Palace. He died at East Cowes Castle on May 13th, 1835.

(The only complete account of Nash's life and works is *John Nash, Architect to George IV*, by John Summerson, published in 1935 by George Allen & Unwin Ltd.)

#### SIR JOHN SOANE (1753-1837)

SOANE WAS EXACTLY Nash's contemporary and like Nash lived to be an octogenarian. In many respects his career was overshadowed by Nash, for as an architect he was a more scholarly and individual artist, but he lacked the persuasive personal ebullience which carried Nash into royal favour.

He was the son of a Reading stonemason and began his working life by running errands for George Dance, the younger. Dance gave him his early architectural training and then sent him to the office of Henry Holland with whom he stayed until 1776. In 1772 he won the Royal Academy Silver Medal and in 1776 the Gold Medal, for a design for a triumphal arch. Sir William Chambers introduced the young Soane to George III who appointed him to a travelling scholarship which took him for three years to Italy and Greece. He returned in 1780 and quickly built up a considerable practice, winning in competition (1788) the post of architect to the Bank of England. Between 1794-1823 he rebuilt the Bank, and it is mainly on this rare and novel building that his reputation is founded; though it was classical in spirit Soane dispensed with many of the symbols of classicism; his Halls, which are still preserved in the rebuilt Bank (the very antithesis of Soane's conception), were boldly modelled with unconventional Byzantine forms; their detail was Soane's special contribution—a new linear or surface treatment of incised lines, grooves and panels. His other great public

building, the Law Courts at Westminster (1827), was pulled down in 1884. In 1874 he had made a wealthy marriage which enabled him to build up his fine collection of works of art (among them Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*) and antiquities and to build his own house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which he endowed and left to the Nation as the Soane Museum. In 1815 he was appointed one of the three architects to the Office of Works. He became an A.R.A. in 1795, an R.A. in 1802 and in 1806 succeeded George Dance as Professor at the Royal Academy where he gave a series of notable lectures. He was knighted in 1831 and died six years later at his home in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

#### SAMUEL PEPYS COCKERELL (1754–1827)

CONTEMPORARY AND friend of Nash and, like him, a pupil of Sir Robert Taylor, S. P. Cockerell is noted chiefly for his work at the Admiralty (he built the First Lord's official residence), the planning of Mecklenburgh and Brunswick Squares in Bloomsbury and of St Anne's Church Tower, Soho (which is all that now remains of the church). He was the father of an even more distinguished architect, Professor C. R. Cockerell. His comfortable practice was buttressed by his appointment as Surveyor to East India House. His last work before his death was the development of the Bishop of London's Paddington Estate to the east of Edgware Road. From 1792–1803 he was a regular exhibitor at the Royal Academy.

#### SIR JEFFREY WYATVILLE (1766–1840)

A MEMBER OF the Wyatt family of architects, he was the son of Joseph Wyatt, an architect of Burton-on-Trent, and nephew of James Wyatt and of Samuel Wyatt, who practised architecture in Berwick Street, London. From 1792–99 he worked in the office of his uncle, James. In 1799 he was taken into partnership by a successful Pimlico builder called John Armstrong. His leanings, however, were always towards the aristocracy and he achieved his ambitions by adding to many of the famous English mansions including Longleat, Wollaton, Chatsworth, and, finally, Windsor Castle itself. His alterations to Windsor Castle, which started in 1824, eventually cost over £600,000 and included the raising of the Round Tower by some thirty feet and the building of the Waterloo Chamber. This work was finished in 1828 and the King, besides knighting him, gave him permission to revise his coat-of-arms and to add the suffix 'ville' to his family name—a conceit which did not impress his architect contemporaries. Wyatville was never a Regency architect in the classical tradition, but as one of the few architects of the period who were granted the diploma of 'Architect to the King' he must be noted in this biographical chapter.

#### JOSEPH MICHAEL GANDY (1771–1843)

ANOTHER PUPIL of James Wyatt, a Royal Academy student and Gold Medallist in 1790, J. M. Gandy is perhaps best known as the faithful and somewhat self-effacing assistant to Sir John Soane. From 1811 onwards he executed many drawings for

Soane and is thought by some to have thereby sacrificed his own career. At any rate the circumstances of his death in 1843 are obscure, but it is known that he died poor and possibly insane. The one building of any size that is ascribed to him (though it has also been ascribed to his younger brother, John Peter Gandy-Deering) was the Phoenix Fire Insurance office at Charing Cross. In 1805 he published a collection of 'Designs for Cottages, Farms and other Rural Buildings, including Entrance Gates and Lodges' and also 'The Rural Architect, consisting of various designs for Country Buildings, etc., with ground plans, estimates and descriptions, etc.'. The publication of such architectural text-books during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did much to standardize taste in building in English country towns.

### JOHN BUONAROTTI PAPWORTH (1775-1847)

J. B. PAPWORTH was one of the 'characters' among Regency architects, a man of immense versatility and energy, a practical builder and craftsman, who wrote treatises on architecture, gardening, industrial design and dry rot, who turned his hand to ship decoration or to town-planning with equal enthusiasm and who did not hesitate to adopt the name of Buonarotti when his friends told him that his design for a Waterloo monument had the Michelangelo touch (the Royal Academy, nevertheless, rejected that particular work).

As the son of a Marylebone 'stuccoist' the young Papworth was reared to a familiarity with architects and building. He received early instruction from the great Palladian, Sir William Chambers, was later apprenticed to the architect John Plaw, and in 1789 to a builder called Thomas Wapshott. A period with the furniture upholsterer, Sheringham of Great Marlborough Street, completed his practical education. His practice as an architect developed satisfactorily in the outer London suburbs (still country in those days), and he built houses for bankers and rich merchants at Woodford, Laleham, Wandsworth, Fyfield, Haresfoot, Streatham (here it was a farm and a farmyard), Woolwich and Chigwell. He was called in to make additions to Holland's Claremont, when Princess Charlotte of Wales and her Consort went to live there.

In 1812 and 1826 he added to the premises in the Strand of the famous publisher, Rudolph Ackermann, and built a large assembly room 'as a place of reunion for the nobility, gentry and artists to converse and inspect the recent works of art'. Between 1820-30 he built St Bride's Avenue, Fleet Street, and opened up a clear view of St Bride's spire.

From 1824-32 Papworth was doing his best work at Cheltenham, where he built the Rotunda, laid out the Montpellier estate, designed several terraces and many private houses. Here he popularized the hooded Regency balcony applied to terrace houses, one of the most educated features of Regency elegance. Less praiseworthy was his introduction of the severed column as a memorial to the dead. He had erected the first of these in 1816 on the field of Waterloo in memory of a Colonel Gordon. At the same time as he was building Cheltenham, Papworth laid out the Brockwell Estate at

Dulwich and made many additions and alterations to houses in Oxford Street and New Bond Street. In 1820 he was given the diploma of 'Architect to the King'.

His 'Essay on the Causes of Dry Rot in Buildings' published in 1803 was the first serious study of this menace, which at that time was doing great damage to old houses. Between 1813-18 he published two volumes of 'Architectural Hints', a collection of 'Rural Residences, a series of Villas, etc.', 'Ornamental Gardening', and in 1835 an essay on a subject that is still being discussed today, namely 'The Benefits resulting to the manufactures of a Country from a well-directed cultivation of Architecture and of the Art of Ornamental Design'. He was himself a practising designer of 'manufactures', particularly in metal. In 1818 he designed the interior fittings for the Thames steam-boat 'London Engineer Steam Packet.' Papworth worked right through to the end of his life. He retired in 1846 and died within a year.

#### WILLIAM WILKINS (1778-1839)

WILKINS WAS THE son of a Norwich architect, was educated at Caius College, Cambridge (of which he became a Fellow), did the conventional tour of Greece and Italy and also of Asia Minor and returned to Cambridge in 1804 to start work on a Greek addition to Downing College. Wilkins owed a great deal to his university connection and much of his practice concerned public and semi-public buildings. He was also an inveterate entrant for architectural competitions; his failures over the Houses of Parliament and the Duke of York's Column were matched by his unexpected success with the National Gallery which he built between 1832-38, the task being made no easier by his having to incorporate the dismantled portico from Carlton House. Among his long list of executed works were Haileybury College (1806), Yarmouth Church spire (1807), the Doric entrance to the Lower Assembly Rooms, Bath (1808), Dalmeny House for Lord Rosebery (Gothic, 1814), Tregothnan, Truro, for Lord Falmouth (1806), the bridge at King's College, Cambridge (1818), Gothic additions to King's College (which nearly ruined the famous Gibbs building), more Gothic at Trinity College and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (1823), the United Universities Club, Pall Mall (1822-26), St George's Hospital, Hyde Park Corner (1827-28). He became an A.R.A. in 1824, an R.A. in 1826 and on Soane's death in 1837 succeeded to the Royal Academy Professorship of Architecture.

#### SIR ROBERT SMIRKE (1781-1867)

IN HIS YOUTH Smirke was one of the many gifted architects who worked with Nash on the 'Metropolitan Improvements'. He lived to see the 'Battle of the Styles' fought out during the early years of Queen Victoria and, though he executed some mock-medieval commissions, he remained a staunch classicist to the end of his days, which were many. His father, Robert Smirke, was a Royal Academician painter who lived to the age of 93. His younger brother, Sydney, was an architect of lesser renown.

Smirke became an architectural student at the Royal Academy in 1796, was for a

few months articulated to Sir John Soane and, after winning a medal from the Royal Society of Arts, went abroad for an extended tour of Italy, Sicily and Greece. He was away four years (1801–5) and on his return published a folio work on 'Specimens of Continental Architecture'. Among his early buildings were Lowther Castle and Eastnor Castle, both in the medieval style, which contrasted with his later massive classical designs, which were usually sombre in treatment, and though always scholarly, were sometimes monotonous. In 1809 he designed the greater part of the Royal Mint on Tower Hill and in the same year rebuilt Covent Garden Theatre at a cost of £150,000. This was burned down in 1856. In 1823 Smirke began his two best known and most distinguished buildings—the General Post Office in St Martin's-le-Grand and the British Museum. The former was demolished in 1913. The latter severely classical building was not finished till 1847, when the southern colonnade was completed. From 1814–28 Smirke was appointed Surveyor to the Inner Temple and while holding that office built the library and dining hall.

Between 1828–31 he added the east wing to Sir William Chambers' Somerset House (the west wing was completed in 1856 by Sir James Pennethorne), and designed the centre block of the London Customs House. Among his other completed works were the College of Physicians in Trafalgar Square, the Carlton Club (which was later rebuilt and finally bombed), the Union Club, the Junior United Services Club, and, with his brother Sydney, the Oxford and Cambridge Club (1856–57),

He was made an A.R.A. in 1808, an R.A. in 1811 and in 1833 was knighted on the abolition of the Board of Works to which he had been one of the three principal architects since 1813. In 1834 he was, like his contemporary William Wilkins, an unsuccessful competitor for the new Houses of Parliament (won by Sir Charles Barry).

#### CHARLES R. COCKERELL (1788–1863)

C. R. WAS THE son of S. P. Cockerell and was for five years articulated in his father's office. In 1809 he acted as personal assistant to Robert Smirke, who was then rebuilding Covent Garden Theatre. In 1810 he left England for a seven years' tour of Greece, Asia Minor and Sicily and returned to become one of the foremost exponents of classical architecture. One of his early appointments after his return was to be Surveyor to St Paul's Cathedral in which capacity he replaced the ball and cross on top of the dome. In 1825 he built the Hanover Chapel in Nash's new Regent Street. Three years later he married the daughter of John Rennie, the engineer designer of Waterloo Bridge. In 1833 he followed Sir John Soane as architect to the Bank of England, became an R.A. in 1836 and in 1840 succeeded William Wilkins as Professor at the Royal Academy. His immense knowledge of Greek antiquities earned him a great reputation in this chair; he is still usually referred to as Professor Cockerell. In 1845 he was working on the unfinished Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, which had been begun by Basevi. The interest of his remarkable classical construction of the Tay-

lorian at Oxford (1841–42) was much overlooked by his contemporaries who were soon to come under the spell of Ruskin's taste. It was perhaps fitting that Professor Cockerell, the last great exponent of classical architecture, should have been called in to finish the finest classical building in this country—St George's Hall, Liverpool; the brilliant young architect of this noble monument, Harvey Lonsdale Elmes, died in his early 30s before the building was completed. Professor Cockerell was the first President and the first Gold Medallist of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

#### GEORGE BASEVI (1794–1845)

WITH GEORGE BASEVI we return to a typical Regency architect, for much of the work of the last two noted belongs properly to a later period. George Basevi was a Londoner. His father's sister married Isaac D'Israeli, so he was first cousin to the great Jewish Prime Minister. In 1811 he began studying under Sir John Soane and is said to have become that master's favourite pupil. In 1816–19 he made a three-year tour of Italy and Greece and returned to become Surveyor to the Guardian Assurance Company. Between 1825–40 he was employed on large speculative building developments in Belgravia and South Kensington. He was responsible for the fine Graeco-Roman terrace houses in Belgrave Square, for Pelham Crescent and later for Thurloe Square, S.W.7. His Belgravia development followed upon Nash's rebuilding of old Buckingham House. With the removal of the Court from Carlton House to Buckingham Palace it was inevitable that the fields to the west of the new palace should become ripe for development. All Londoners should be thankful that this development was undertaken with such breadth and imagination, for the squares and terraces of Belgravia are aristocratic building on the grand scale. With the destruction of Nash's West End, Basevi's development has an increased scarcity value. Basevi's most notable building outside London was the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge which he began in 1837. The museum was finally completed by E. M. Barry after Professor Cockerell had made additions in 1845.

#### DECIMUS BURTON (1800–1881)

THOUGH BURTON LIVED later into the nineteenth century than any of the architects already noted he is never regarded as a Victorian, for all his major works were done while he was still in his 20s and early 30s. He was the tenth son of the prosperous Bloomsbury builder, James Burton, who was the contractor for much of Nash's 'Metropolitan Improvements'. Decimus was, therefore, brought up as a builder and architect and began practising his profession before he was 20. One of his first buildings was a Regent's Park villa for his father. He designed Cornwall Terrace, Regent's Park, when he was 21. At 25 he built the famous screen and arch at Hyde Park Corner (the arch has since been moved to the top of Constitution Hill). At that time he was an architect to the Office of Woods and Forests and in that capacity built many of the little lodges and gates which still grace Hyde Park. He also built the Guards'



Magazine near George Rennie's Serpentine Bridge. His largest building, the Panorama in Regent's Park, called the Colosseum, was a financial failure and was pulled down within a few years of its building, but its 24-year-old architect had astonished Londoners by erecting a dome larger than that of St Paul's.

In 1831 Burton built Charing Cross Hospital and in the same year designed the Athenaeum Club in Waterloo Place.

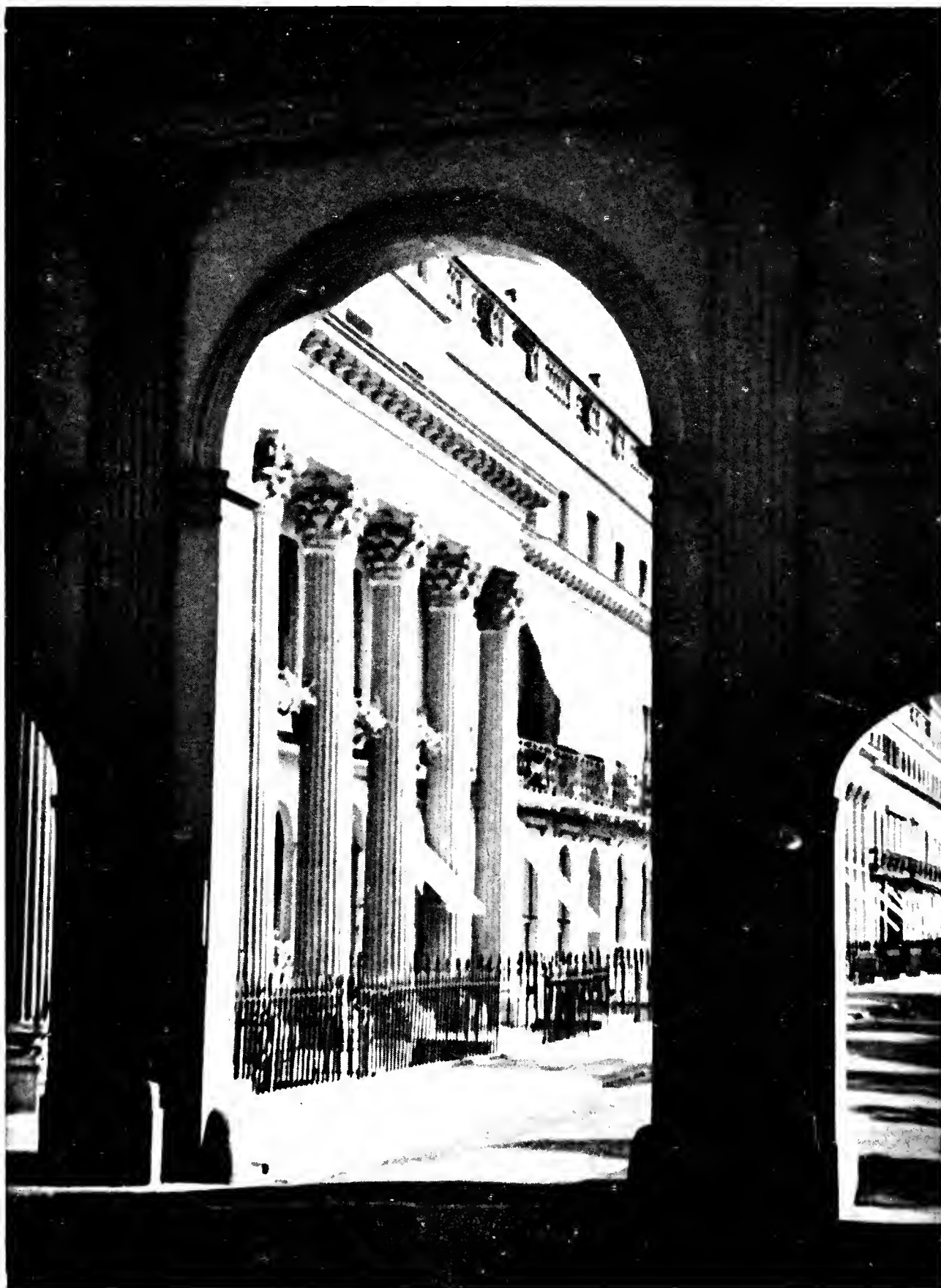
His father was the contractor for most of the building of St Leonards, near Hastings, and the young Decimus executed the designs; in fact, much of what we know as the seaside Regency architecture was the work of this young man, for he was engaged at Brighton (Adelaide Terrace and Crescent) and at Hastings as well as at St Leonards. In 1828 he was called in by a Mr John Ward of Holwood to develop the Calverley Estate at Tunbridge Wells. This commission appears to have withdrawn Burton from circulation, for he was soon to be devoting his whole attention to the layout and direction of this first Early Victorian inland spa. The first estate consisted of twenty-six acres and was intended to provide private houses 'suitable for genteel families', hotels and shops. In fact a new town sprang up and Burton was able to imprint on it his own classical tradition. The only Gothic departure was, strangely enough, the villa he built for himself. Following his activities at Tunbridge Wells little was heard of Decimus Burton. Tastes changed, the classical tradition failed and was supplanted by other schools and Burton lived out his days in architectural obscurity. It was only with the revival of interest in Georgian and classical building that his astonishing prowess as a young man was again appreciated.

*Opposite: Chester Terrace, Regent's Park, London, designed by John Nash, built in 1825.*

*A contemporary said of it 'It is designed by Mr Nash, and like most of that gentleman's works, combines genius and carelessness.*

*Genius, and powerful conception, in the composition, and a grasp of mind equalled by no artist of the day in the design: and carelessness sometimes degenerating to littleness, with a deficiency of elegance in the details'*

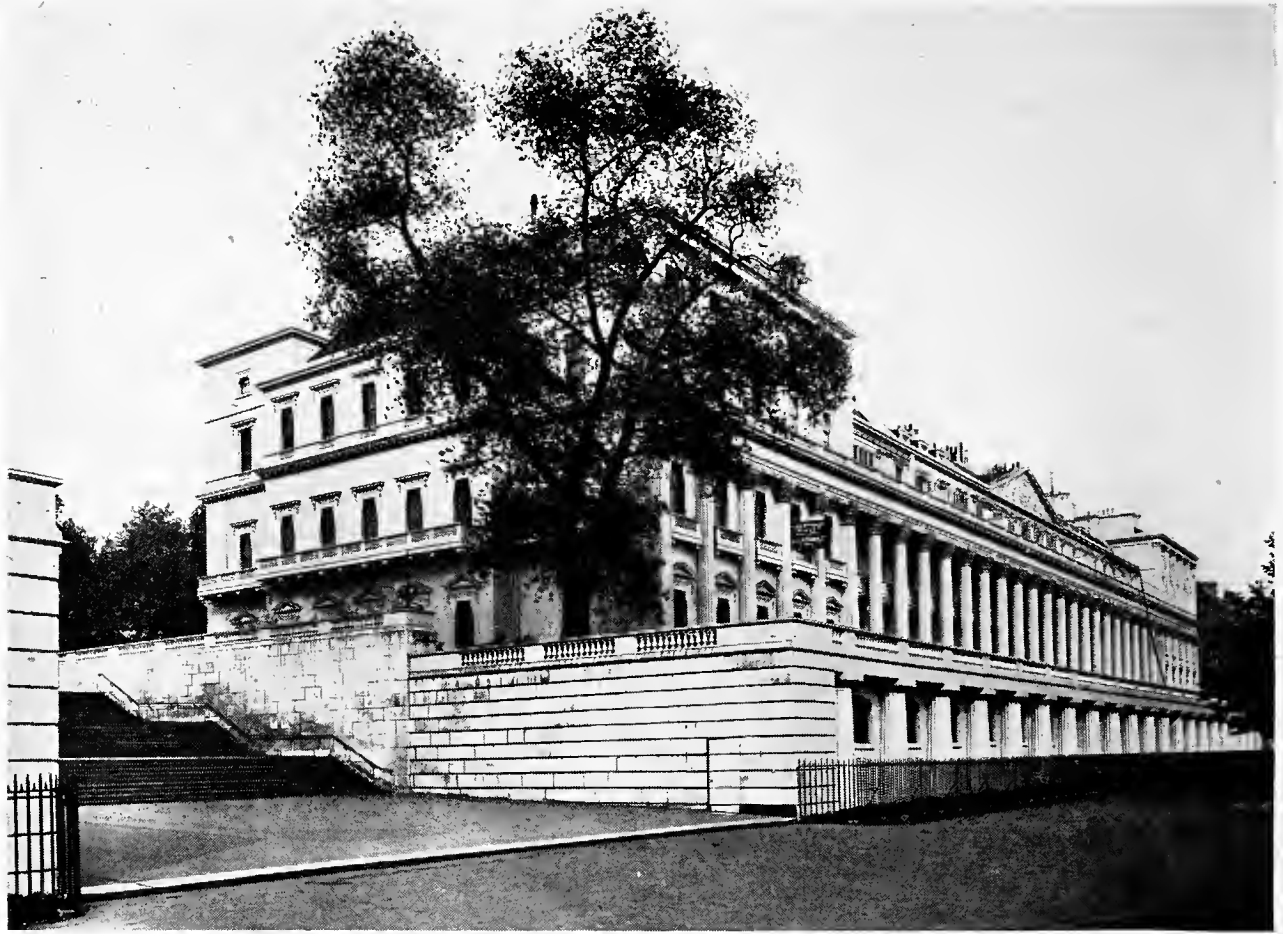
*(James Elmes, Metropolitan Improvements, 1827)*





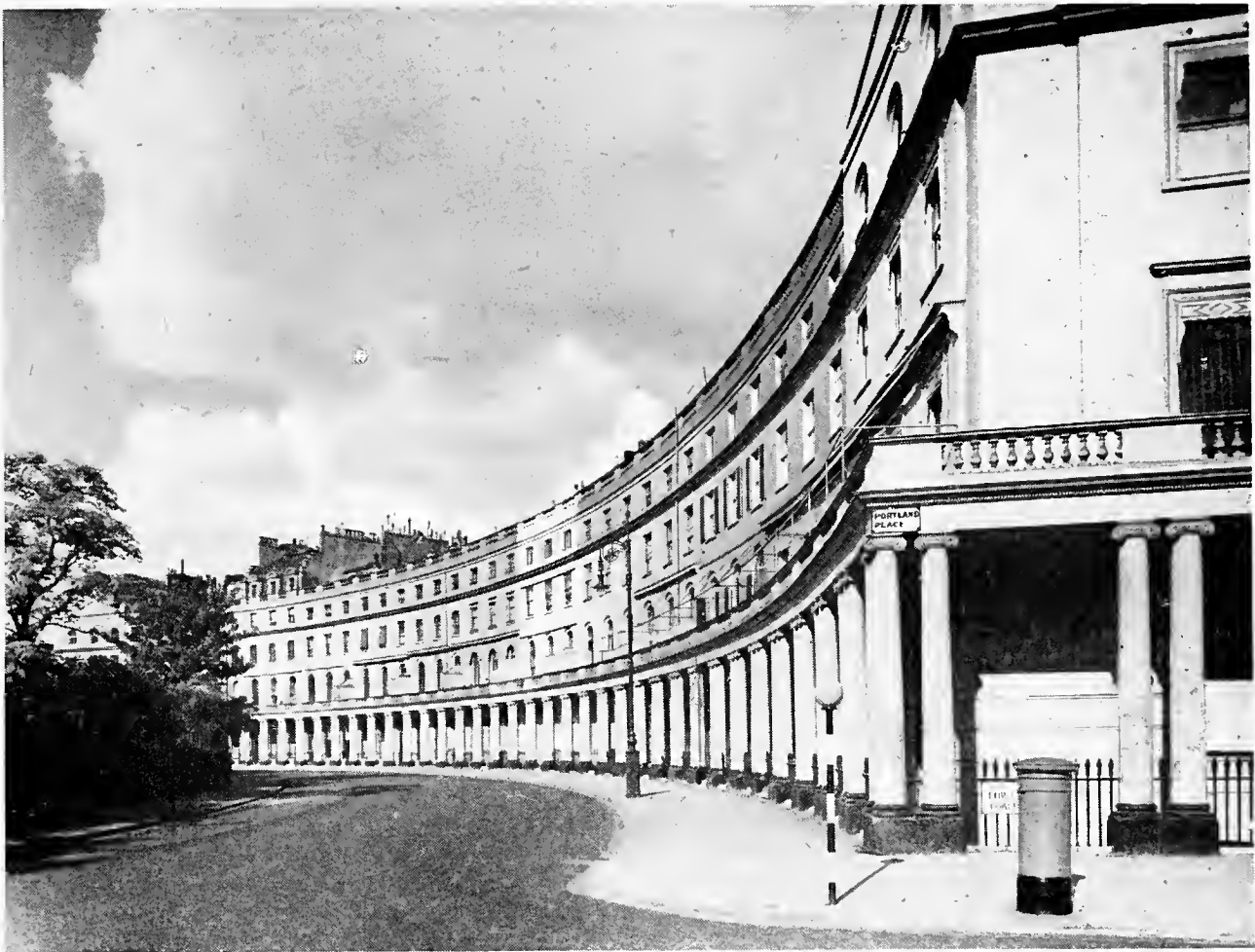


Three views of Cumberland Terrace,  
Regent's Park, by John Nash (1827).  
This is theatrical architecture on the  
grand scale; the three blocks of mansions,  
connected by Ionic triumphal arches,  
boast seven porticoes and a crowning  
pediment filled with terra cotta sculpture  
by J. G. Bubb



The east wing of Carlton House Terrace, London, laid out and designed by John Nash between 1827–32 when he was in his late 70s. Though architecturally imperfect (they are criticized for the clumsiness in the end pavilion attics, the carelessness of the detail and the superfluousness of the central pediments which mark no architectural feature below) these terraces dominate London's one great processional way and are among the few compositions left in the West End which proclaim London to be a capital city





Park Crescent, Regent's Park (John Nash, 1812). In spite of contemporary criticism ('the great size of this semicircle of mansions is more imposing in effect than the details are choice in selection') this crescent is one of London's finest examples of architecture and town planning running in harness. It was because Nash was as much town planner and landscape planner as architect that his Regency improvements have stood the test of time. His plan for Regent's Park and the West End was three dimensional; it embraced churches and terraces and crescents of houses as well as streets and parks and quadrants. Though his detail may have been imperfect there is no doubt about the grandeur of his compositions and the inspiration of their siting



Hanover Terrace, Regent's Park (John Nash, 1822-23), is a straightforward, three-porticoed Roman Doric terrace with an arcaded ground floor and, as usual, a cast-iron balcony at the first floor windows





The Haymarket Theatre was rebuilt by Nash in 1820. He moved the new building a short way down the hill so that it would close the vista of King Charles Street from St James's Square. The outside is still as Nash built it, but the inside has twice been rebuilt since his time



The Athenaeum Club, Waterloo Place, one of the finest designs of Decimus Burton. The frieze above the principal storey was said to be copied from the Elgin frieze in the British Museum

*Opposite, top:* Robert Abraham's County Fire Office (1819–1925)  
*Bottom:* Nash's Piccadilly Circus before demolition









*Above:* Brunswick Terrace, Hove. The two Brunswick Terraces, the finest features of the distinguished sea-front at Brighton, were built in 1825 to the designs of H. Wilds and Charles Busby

*Opposite, top:* Victoria Square, London, SW1, a pleasant early 19th-century precinct with balancing corner features and discreet Corinthian pilasters

*Opposite, bottom:* Bedford Hotel, Brighton, an example of clumsy juxtaposition of two orders, which, though presaging subsequent decline, still has a robust classical form



The bow window was a Regency favourite. These two examples from Brighton show extremes in scale. *Above* is the splendid Brunswick Square by Wilds and Busby (c. 1826) which, though officially protected from disfigurement by an Act of Parliament of 1830, has nevertheless been spoiled through ignorant alterations by individual householders

*Left:* Nos. 14 and 15 Crown Street, Brighton

*Opposite, top:* Houses in the New Steyne, Brighton, showing the remains of Regency elegance in the bows and balconies; the group suffers from thoughtless alterations and lack of paint

*Below* is Crown House, 57 Marina, St Leonards. In 1834–35 Queen Victoria stayed here with her mother, before her accession. The house was probably designed by Decimus Burton and built by his father, a prosperous builder who developed most of St Leonards









Corner of Adelaide Crescent, Hove, designed by Decimus Burton in 1830 and built on an estate belonging to the wealthy financier Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, who was later created Baron da Palmeira by the King of Portugal. Both his names are preserved in Hove; this great crescent, which has two curves, one concave and one convex, was named after the Queen of King William IV



The triangular block formed by Adelaide Street, William IV Street and the Strand, was part of Robert Smirke's West Strand improvements of the 1830s. These rounded features are repeated at each corner. Their architectural unity is generally overlooked because they are seldom painted at the same time or in the same colour

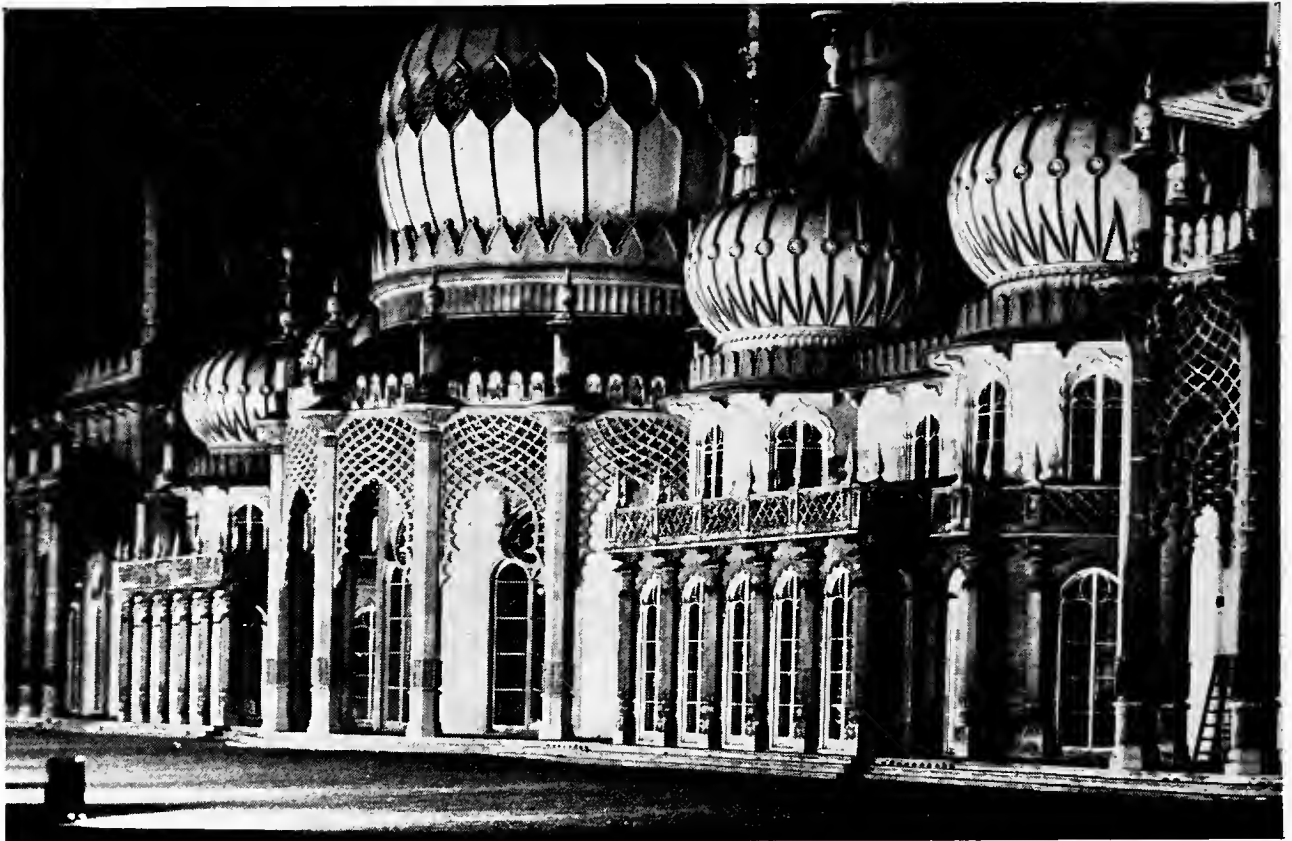


St George's Hospital, Hyde Park Corner. The original building (1733) was a large private house, then on the outskirts of London, which had been remodelled by Samuel Ware. The present building, in its day one of the largest in London, was designed in 1827 by William Wilkins, the architect of the National Gallery. Note the unusual square columns of the portico

*Opposite:* Cannon Place, Brighton. An example of the Regency temptation to make mountains out of molehills







The Royal Pavilion, Brighton. Originally this was a modest country house designed by Henry Holland for George IV, when he was Prince of Wales. Between 1802 and 1823 the building underwent a series of additions and transformations at the hands of several architects, each of whom sold a different style to the Prince Regent. Possibly it all started with a gift of some Chinese wallpaper for which a suitable room had to be built. Then Humphry Repton produced an Indian design for the roof line which caught the Regent's fancy. Later the Regent and Nash together built the domes and minarets. The Pavilion became the Regent's private plaything on which he squandered vast sums, only to leave it for good shortly after the work was finished. John Summerson, in his biography of John Nash, says of it 'In its day it was the target of every wag. . . . To radicals it was a red rag; to connoisseurs a monster of stylistic impurity. Today it is simply a minor historical monument, and to the citizens of Brighton a familiar curio containing halls which may be hired for lectures and concerts'



Few people cared to copy the Prince Regent's oriental tastes. This tea-shop in Brighton is one of the rare contemporary examples of this pantomime architecture





*Above:* Wolseley Terrace, Cheltenham. The repeating fluted pilasters, with their Ionic caps, are designed to make this terrace read as one architectural composition instead of a series of separate homes. Note how discreetly the individual house entrances are tucked away to avoid destroying this illusion. The cutting of the first cornice to lengthen the attic windows of the end house was a later 'improvement' and is an example of the kind of damage that such terraces will suffer once individual householders are allowed to tamper with their own property

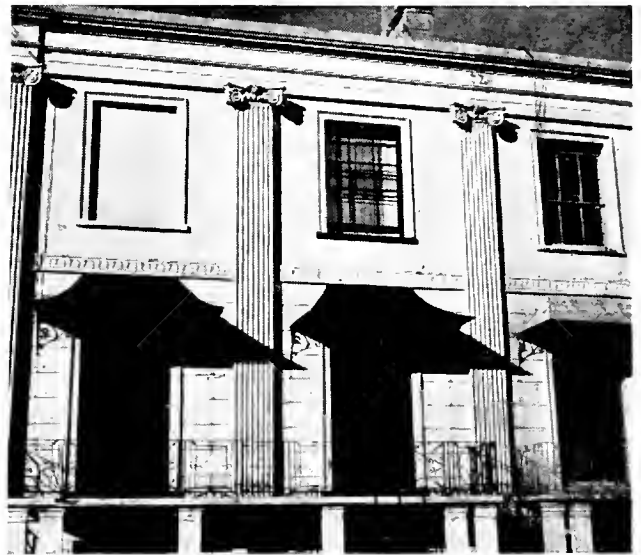
*Opposite, top:* Lewes Crescent, Kemp Town, Brighton (architect, H. E. Kendall), complements, at the east end, Adelaide Crescent at the west end of the long Brighton sea front

*Bottom:* Pelham Crescent, South Kensington, more modest in scale, is one of the best examples of George Basevi's work. It was built between 1825 and 1840 when Basevi was engaged on the Belgravia and South Kensington developments

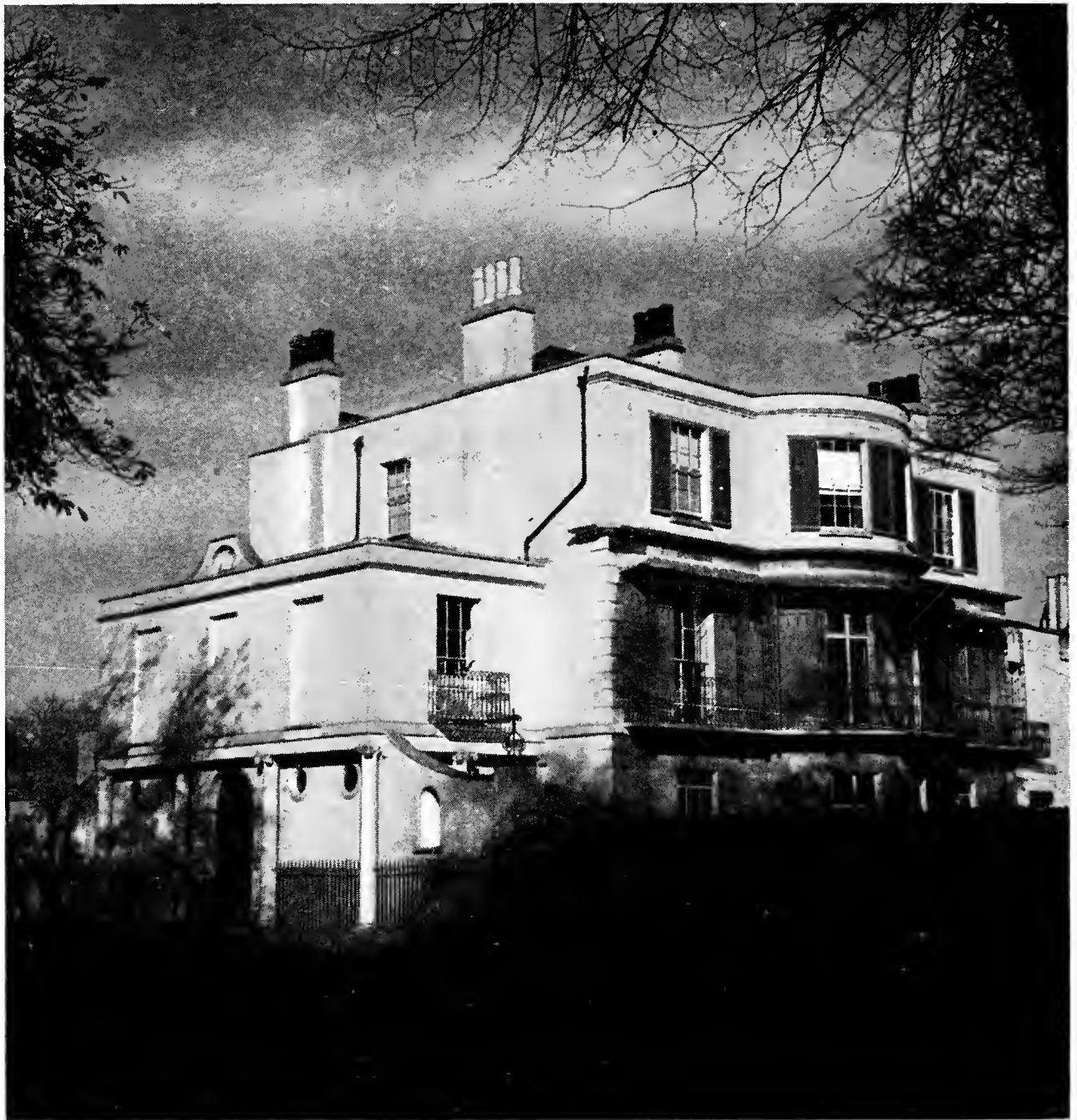




The Promenade, Cheltenham, designed by John Buonarotti Papworth. Through sharing architectural features these modest houses achieve a scale and dignity out of all proportion to their cost. They are faced with painted stucco and are embellished with delicate cast-iron railings and hooded balconies



*Above:* Cumberland Terrace and Munster Square, London  
*Below:* Rodney House and Wolseley Terrace, Cheltenham  
 These four pictures show the Regency use of the stucco pilaster to unite a series of terrace houses and to punctuate the end pavilions in a square or the corner of a detached villa



Claremont Lodge, Cheltenham. This large Regency villa shows two features that are very typical of the period: the gently swelling bow rising the whole height of the house and the decorated cast-iron hooded balcony, which is carried right across the house. Note also the painted shutters framing the top floor windows



A villa in Pittville, Cheltenham.  
This formal little mansion,  
reminiscent of a classical temple,  
stands in that spacious quarter  
of Cheltenham developed by  
Joseph Pitt (and, like Kemp Town,  
Brighton, named after its builder)





Another bow-fronted Regency villa,  
also in Pittville, Cheltenham. Note how  
the roof parapet sweeps up to the  
chimney stack to form an end gable



Imperial Square, Cheltenham, a long regular terrace with the monotony relieved by an elegant and continuous hooded balcony to the first floor windows. This feature was first popularized by J. B. Papworth



Houses at the entrance to Dix's Field, Exeter.  
The splendid end house, with its wide bow  
windows and elegant trellised balcony, was  
destroyed in a German 'Baedeker' raid on Exeter





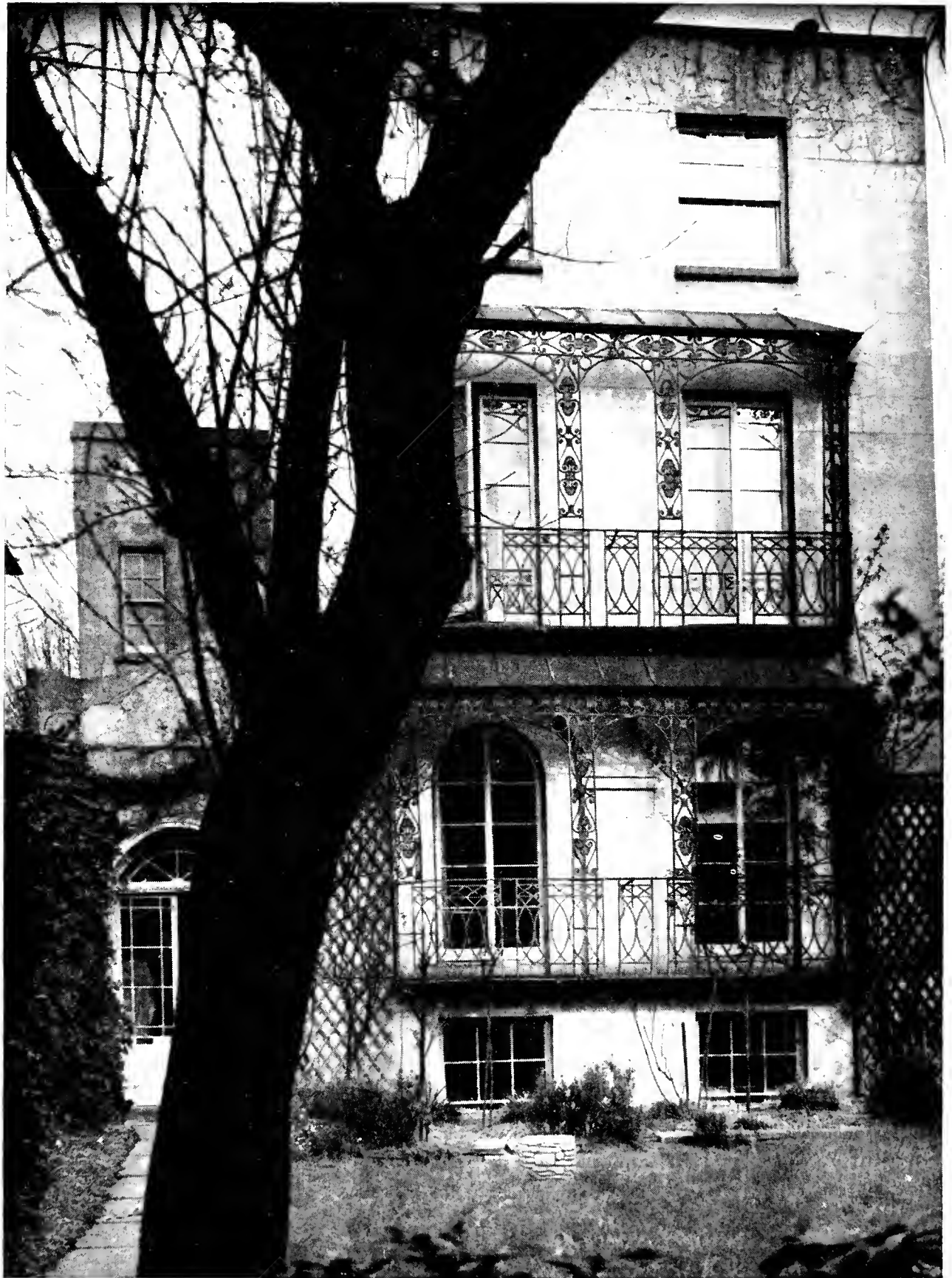
Two more Pittville villas at Cheltenham. Though the scale and surface treatment are different these two neighbours get along well together. The one on the left relies on moulded cornices, pilasters and architraves to relieve its plain surface; the one on the right depends for its interest on its splendid trellised verandah balcony which is rightly set against an otherwise plain façade





*Opposite, top:* Lansdown Parade,  
Cheltenham, a terrace of small houses  
spoilt by the pretentious Doric porticoes

*Opposite, bottom:* Rodney Road,  
Cheltenham, and *above:* Munster Square,  
London, are both terraces of modest  
houses which make no pretensions to  
architectural magnificence and are the  
better for it



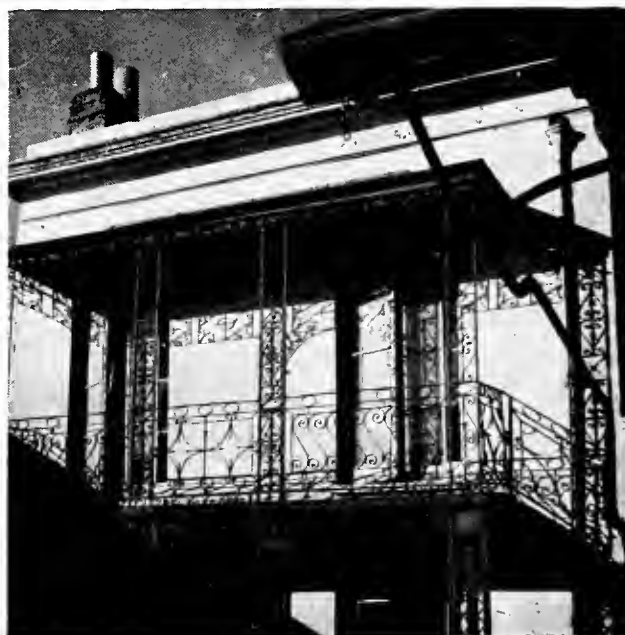




*Opposite:* A house in Downshire Hill, Hampstead

*Above:* A pair of villas in Montpellier, Cheltenham. Plain stucco surfaces and rich iron work was a happy Regency formula. The balcony fronts of the London house show a popular design of the period for mass produced cast iron. The trellis piers include the typical Regency anthemion or Greek honey-suckle pattern

*Right:* Rich ironwork in Bath Road, Cheltenham



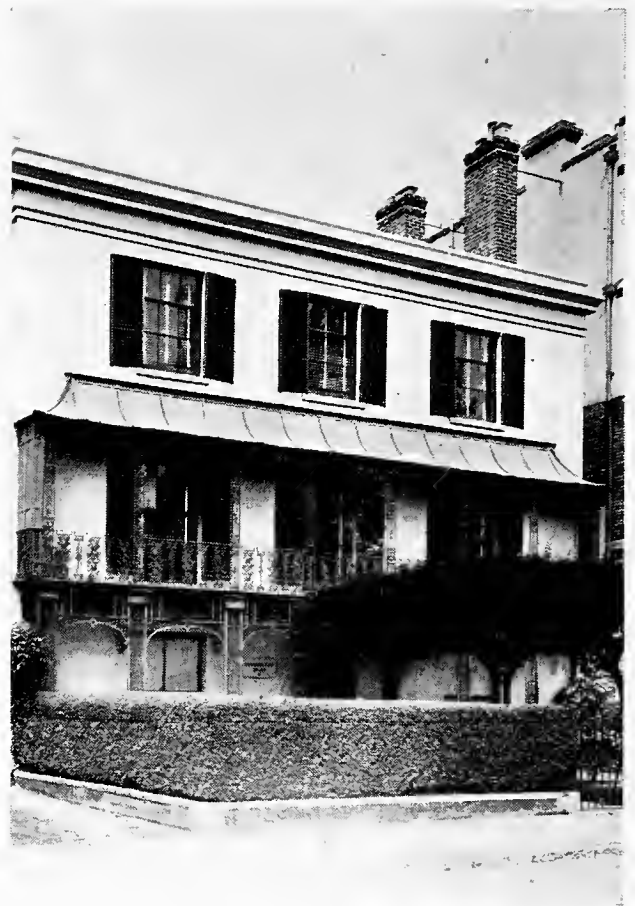


Houses in Alexander Place, South Kensington. These were probably built about 1827–30 under the direction of George Basevi, who designed the neighbouring Pelham Crescent and supervised the Thurloe Square development. Note the balcony design, the commonest of the period, and the gentle, repeating bow windows to the ground floor rooms



Two houses in Russell Square, Brighton, and three typical Regency features: the hooded balcony, the incised design in the stucco and the three-sided bow carried up the whole house front







More decorative ironwork in  
Cheltenham

*Above:* a modest street behind the Rotunda

*Below:* fine hooded balconies on the  
Royal Crescent. These two pictures and  
the four on the page opposite give a good  
idea of the importance that Regency  
builders attached to balcony and verandah  
features

*Opposite, top:* Regency balconies:  
Edwards Square, Kensington;  
Cumberland Place, Southampton

*Bottom:* Dean Street, Brighton;  
Munster Square, London





*Left:* Grand Parade, Brighton. A series of large bow fronted houses, some plain with simple balconies, others, like the two shown here, heavily arcaded at the second floor with hooded balconies below

*Right:* Pennsylvania Park, Exeter, showing details of a corner house, with overhanging eaves, panelled pilasters and covered balcony

*Opposite, top:* A general view of the series of houses in Pennsylvania Park, Exeter. As first built these were detached homes connected only by the Ionic arches. All but one of the interstices have been blocked by additions

*Opposite, bottom:* Royal Crescent, Brighton, an attractive and unusual terrace in glazed black brick, which demands white paint to the window frames







Houses on the west side of Marine Square, Brighton. This otherwise uninteresting terrace of houses is remarkable for the crinoline hooded balconies. The hoods are made from sheet lead



Pelham Crescent, Hastings. There is a family likeness between this crescent and Marine Square, Brighton. Here the hooded balconies are not so squat, the crown of the hood being lifted up a storey to give cover to smaller balconies to the second floor windows. The repeating semicircles of the projecting balconies are echoed in the attic storey windows



This pretty villa at Havering-atte-Bower in Essex is typical of many small detached Regency houses; its overhanging eaves, the bowed front, the broad windows and the trellised balcony are all good features of the period



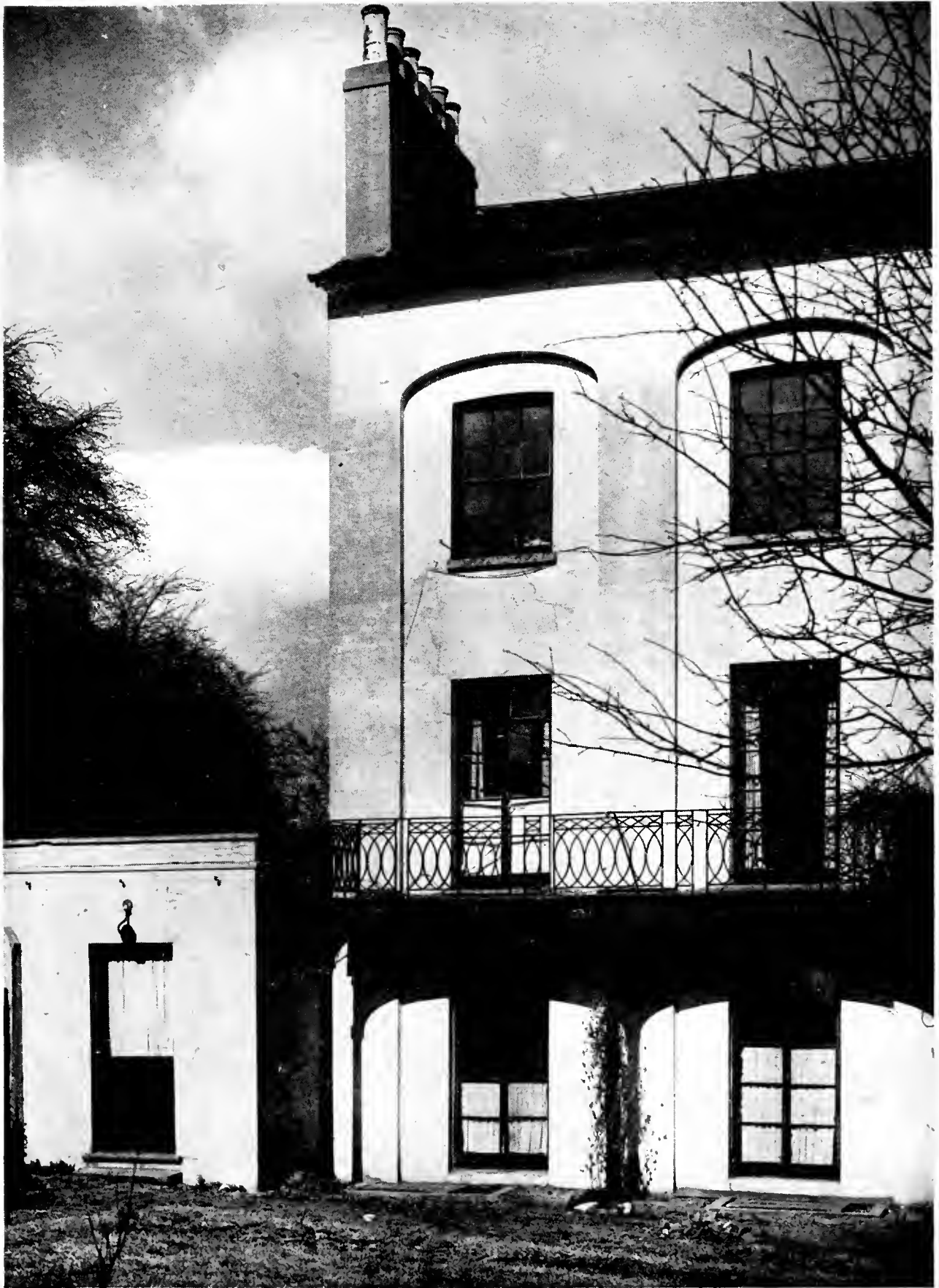


Though this Weymouth shop-front may date from a few years before the Regency (Weymouth was developed as a fashionable resort under King George III) the gently rounded front and the fenestration are of the type that continued into the early years of the 19th century



*Above:* South End Road, Hampstead

*Opposite:* No. 38 Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead. Note in both these pictures the use of arcading round the windows to give interest to a plain façade









Nos. 103-105 South End Road, Hampstead. Plain surfaces relieved by well-proportioned, well-spaced windows with the commonest form of Regency cast-iron balcony

*Opposite:* Two minor examples of Regency building, *above:* in Cheltenham; *below:* in Colchester



Houses in Medburn Street, London, NW1, and off Goswell Road, Islington. Many such homes have become slums through landlords' neglect, but they started with considerable architectural proportion and merit





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